



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

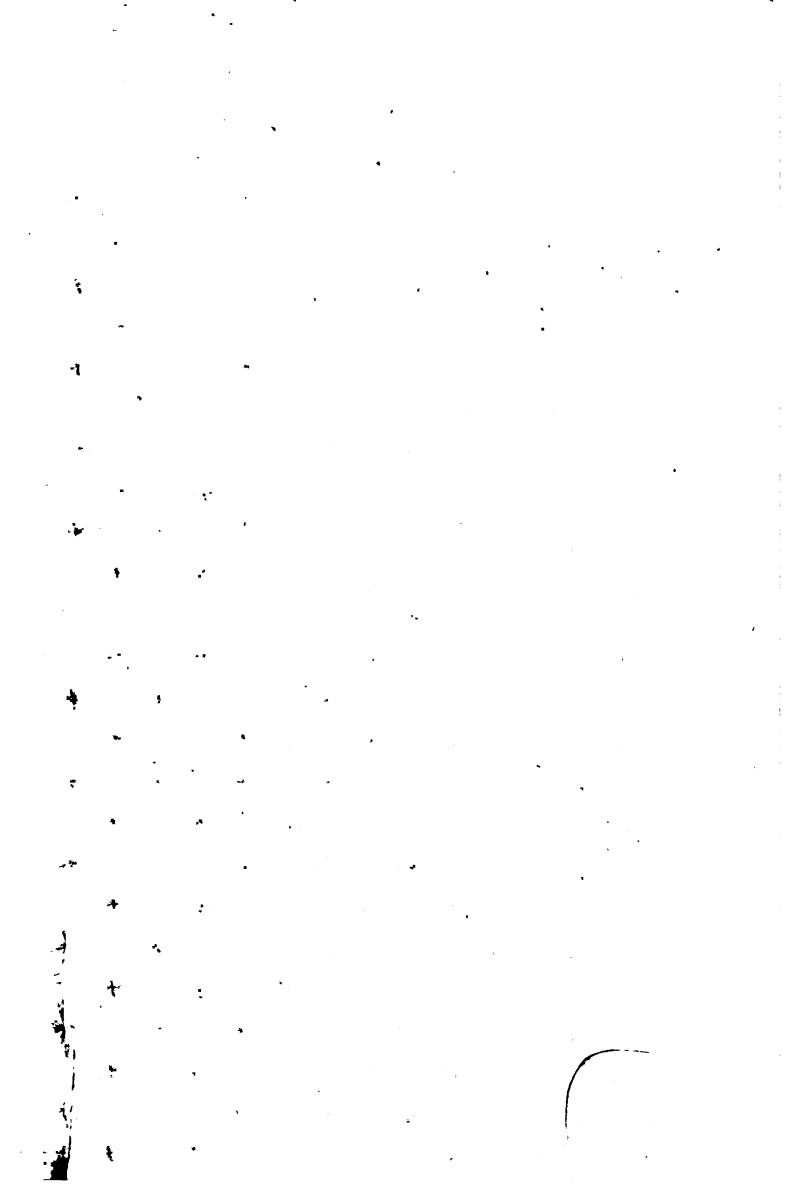


\$B 272 833



EX LIBRIS

111
M42



THE
BEST STORIES IN
THE WORLD

COMPILED AND EDITED BY
THOMAS L. MASSON
of LIFE

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY

1914

Copyright, 1913, by
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY

*All rights reserved, including that of
translation into foreign languages,
including the Scandinavian*

NO. 1111
ANNEX

TO THE READERS:

THE stories in this little volume have been gathered from a variety of sources during the past decade. The accomplished reader will recognize among them many old friends. A good story never grows old.

Most of these stories have stood many tests. They have been repeated to audiences and have been widely copied and passed from one to another. If the over-critical reader does not think them humorous, the fault must be his own. No two people are likely to agree about the point of a joke. The reason for this lies largely in our experience. The wider and deeper this experience becomes, the keener is our appreciation of wit, humour, and satire.

There is also much truth in the saying that the point of a jest lies in the telling of it. These anecdotes lose much from the cold type. They require the personality of an actor to heighten their effect. Some of them are artificial and lie

TO THE READER

upon the surface of things. Others strikingly illustrate large truths. They are racial, philosophical, human.

Lastly, they should be taken in small doses.

T. L. M.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

A BIG DIFFERENCE

JUDGE GILES BAKER of a Pennsylvania county was likewise cashier of his home bank. A man presented a check one day for payment. He was a stranger. His evidence of identification was not satisfactory to the cashier.

"Why, Judge," said the man, "I've known you to sentence men to be hanged on no better evidence than this!"

"Very likely," replied the judge. "But when it comes to letting go of cold cash we have to be mighty careful."

P R I D E

DURING the Civil War the late Colonel Gabe Bouch organized a regiment which he controlled as a dictator.

"I am an humble servant of the Lord," said

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

an itinerant evangelist who had wandered into camp one day, "endeavouring to save the souls of the unfortunate. I have just left the camp of the —th Massachusetts, where I was instrumental in leading eight men into the paths of righteousness."

"Adjutant," thundered Colonel Bouch, after a moment's pause, "detail ten men for baptism. No d—d Massachusetts regiment shall beat mine for piety."

EXPERIENCED

THIS is a jury-room secret that has come into circulation in some mysterious way:

"Look here," said one of the jurymen, after they had retired, "if I understand aright, the plaintiff doesn't ask damages for blighted affections or anything of that sort, but only wants to get back what he's spent on presents, pleasure trips, and so forth."

"That is so," agreed the foremen.

"Well, then, I vote we don't give him a penny," said the other hastily. "If all the fun he had with that girl didn't cover the amount he expended, it must be his own fault. Gentlemen, I courted that girl once myself."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

ENCOURAGING

A LADY advanced in age, and in a declining state of health, went, by the advice of the physician, to take lodgings in a village near the metropolis. She agreed for a suite of rooms, and coming downstairs observed that the balustrades were much out of repair.

"These," said the lady, "must be mended, before I can think of coming to live here."

"Oh, no, madam," replied the landlady, "that would answer no purpose, as the undertaker's men in bringing down the coffins would break them again immediately."

A LIVELY OCCUPATION

SENATOR MORGAN once threw down a magazine with a sneer. "Another nature fake," he exclaimed. "Why, these things are as absurd as — as absurd as ——" And then he laughed and said that it reminded him of an address that he once heard an absent-minded missionary make. "'In China, dear friends,' said the missionary, 'human life is regarded as of but slight value. Indeed, if a wealthy Chinaman is condemned to death, he can easily hire

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

another to die for him; and I believe many poor fellows get their living by thus acting as substitutes.’”

TROUT

THE enthusiastic angler was telling some friends about a proposed fishing trip to a lake in Colorado which he had in contemplation.

“Are there any trout out there?” asked one friend.

“Thousands of ’em,” replied the angler.

“Will they bite easily?” asked another friend.

“Will they? Why, they’re absolutely vicious. A man has to hide behind a tree to bait a hook.”

THE ABSCONDER

AN ENGLISHMAN and an Irishman went to the captain of a ship bound for America and asked permission to work their passage over. The captain consented, but asked the Irishman for references and let the Englishman go on without them. This made the Irishman angry, and he planned to get even.

One day when they were washing off the deck

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

the Englishman leaned far over the rail, dropped the bucket, and was just about to haul it up when a huge wave came and pulled him overboard.

The Irishman stopped scrubbing, went over to the rail, and, seeing the Englishman had disappeared, went to the captain and said: "Perhaps yez remimber whin I shipped aboard this vessel ye asked me for riferences and let the Englishman come on widout thim?"

The captain said: "Yes, I remember."

"Well, ye've been decaved," said the Irishman; "he's gone off wid yer pail!"

HE WENT TOO FAR

A STORY is current concerning a professor who is reputed to be slightly absent-minded. The learned man had arranged to escort his wife one evening to the theatre. "I don't like the tie you have on. I wish you would go up and put on another," said his wife.

The professor tranquilly obeyed. Moment after moment elapsed, until finally the impatient wife went upstairs to learn the cause of delay. In his room she found her husband undressed and getting into bed.

COURAGE

A FARMER spilled some whiskey on his barn floor, so that a little stream of it ran out. A certain mouse sallied forth from his hole and being thirsty took a sip. It tasted strange and he went back in his hole and thought. Then he came out and took another sip and went back again and thought. Then he came out and took a big drink. Then he jumped up on the edge of the soap box and stood up on his hind legs, bristled up his whiskers, and exclaimed:

“Now bring out that damned cat!”

L I T E R A L

THIS story illustrates the characteristics of certain American millionaires who make themselves conspicuous on the other side of the water. This particular millionaire was presented at court when King Edward was on the throne. Queen Alexandria was slightly deaf, and the millionaire was cautioned beforehand about her weakness. After he had been presented, she turned to him graciously and said:

“How long have you been over?”

Looking her in the eye, and holding up five fingers, he exclaimed in a loud voice: “Five weeks!”

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

APPROPRIATE

A NEW ENGLAND town had bought a new fire engine, and the chief of the fire department, after gathering all the boys together, suggested that an appropriate motto be placed over the fire house. The thing was debated at some length and several suggestions were made. Finally one man rose up and said:

"I move the following motto: 'May this fire engine be like all the old maids in our village — always ready, but never called for.'"

SAVING MONEY

A CERTAIN man was ill and wished to consult a celebrated specialist who was known to a friend of his. He went to his friend and said:

"Look here, how much does that doctor charge? He's pretty expensive, isn't he?"

"You bet he is!" replied the friend. "He charges \$15 for the first visit; but after that it's only \$3."

The next day the man called on the doctor. As soon as the door was opened and the doctor came out, he said:

"Well, doc; here I am again."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

POSITIVE GENIUS

TWO Jews were in a railway accident and got pretty badly smashed up. Each of them sued the railroad. One of them got \$20,000 damages and the other got \$25,000. The one who got \$20,000 met his friend one day and with considerable excitement said:

"Look here, lkey; how does it happen dot you got five tousand more dan me?"

His friend shrugged his shoulders significantly.

"My tear frient," he said, "it vos easy. During der excitement, l had der presence of mind to kick my wife in der face."

HIS PREFERENCE

A YOUNG lady sat next to a distinguished bishop at a church dinner. She was somewhat modest and diffident, and was rather awed by the bishop's presence. For some time she hesitated to speak to him, waiting for what she considered to be a favourable opportunity. Finally, seeing some bananas passed, she turned to him and said:

"I beg your pardon; but are you fond of bananas?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

The bishop was slightly deaf, and leaning forward replied:

"What did you say?"

"I said," repeated the young lady, blushing; "are you fond of bananas?"

The bishop thought for a moment, and then said:

"If you want my honest opinion: I have always preferred the old-fashioned nightshirt."

CARRYING HIS AUDIENCE

N OBODY was more witty or more bitter than Lord Ellenborough. A young lawyer, trembling with fear, rose to make his first speech, and began:

"My lord, my unfortunate client — my lord, my unfortunate client — my lord ——"

"Go on, sir, go on!" said Lord Ellenborough; "as far as you have proceeded hitherto, the court is entirely with you."

T HE late Mr. Hayward said of Carlyle that his great aim and philosophy of life was "the smallest happiness of the fewest number."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

SAILOR'S WISH

WHEN the British ships under Lord Nelson were bearing down to attack the combined fleet of Trafalgar, the first lieutenant of the *Revenge*, on going round to see that all hands were at quarters, observed one of them devoutly kneeling at the side of his gun. So very unusual an attitude in an English sailor exciting his surprise and curiosity, he went and asked the man if he was afraid.

"Afraid!" answered the honest tar, with a countenance expressive of the utmost disdain. "No! I was only praying that the enemy's shot may be distributed in the same proportion as the prize money — the greatest part among the officers."

DECLINED WITH THANKS

THE Duke of Wellington, who had a taste for anything that Napoleon had liked, applied to David the artist, who had painted Napoleon's portrait, requesting David to execute one of himself.

"Sir," replied David, "I paint only historical characters."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

DE TROP

(A Letter written by Simeon Ford to P.T. Barnum.)

P. T. Barnum, Esq.

DEAR SIR:

We have a large, soiled, Asiatic elephant visiting us now, and we suspect that he belongs to you. His skin is a misfit and he keeps moving his trunk from side to side nervously. If you have missed an elephant answering to this description, please come up and take him away as we have no use for him. An elephant on a place so small as ours is more of a trouble than a convenience. I have endeavoured to frighten him away but he does not seem to be timid, and my wife and I, assisted by the hired man, tried to push him out of the yard, but our efforts were unavailing. He has made our home his now for some days and has become *de trop*. We do not mind him so much in the daytime, for he then basks mostly on the lawn with the children (to whom he has greatly endeared himself), but at night he lays his head on our back piazza, and his deep and stertorous breathing keeps my wife awake. We feel that we are entitled to compensation for his keep; he is a large but not fastidious eater, and he has destroyed some of

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

our plants by tramping on them. He also leaned against our woodhouse. My neighbour — who is something of a wag — says I have a lien on his trunk for the amount of his board, but this of course is only a pleasantry. Your immediate attention will oblige.

SIMEON FORD.

OVER TRAINED

FELLOW-CITIZENS," said the candidate, "I have fought against the Indians. I have often had no bed but the battlefield, and no canopy but the sky. I have marched over the frozen ground, till every step has been marked with blood."

His story told well, till a dried-up looking voter came to the front.

"Did you say yer'd fought for the Union?"

"Yes," replied the candidate.

"And agin the Indians?"

"Yes, many a time."

"And that you had slept on the ground with only the sky for a kiver?"

"Certainly."

"And that your feet bled in marching over the frozen ground?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"That they did," cried the exultant candidate.

"Then I'll be darned if you hain't done enough for your country. Go home and rest. I'll vote for the other fellow."

MERELY TECHNICAL

A RELIGIOUS worker was visiting a Southern penitentiary, when one prisoner in some way took his fancy. This prisoner was a negro, who evinced a religious fervour as deep as it was gratifying to the caller.

"Of what were you accused?" the prisoner was asked.

"Dey says I took a watch," answered the negro. "I made a good fight. I had a dandy lawyer, an' he done prove an alibi wif ten witnesses. Den my lawyer he shore made a strong speech to de jury. But it wa'n't no use, sah; I gets ten years."

"I don't see why you were not acquitted," said the religious worker.

"Well, sah," explained the prisoner, "dere was shore one weak spot 'bout my defence — dey found de watch in my pocket."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

A PUZZLE

THE proprietor of a tanyard was anxious to fix a suitable sign to his premises. Finally a happy thought struck him.

He bored a hole through the doorpost and stuck a calf's tail into it with the tufted end outside.

After a while he saw a solemn-faced man standing near the door looking at the sign. The tanner watched him a minute and then stepped out and addressed him.

"Good morning, sir," he said.

"Good morning," said the other, without taking his eyes off the sign.

"Do you want to buy leather?" asked the tanner.

"No."

"Perhaps you've got some hides to sell?"

"No."

"Are you a farmer?"

"No."

"What are you, then?"

"I am a philosopher. I've been standing here for nearly an hour trying to find out how that calf got through that hole."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

DEDUCTION

A YOUNG man fell into a state of coma, but recovered before his friends had buried him. One of them asked what it felt like to be dead.

"Dead!" he exclaimed. "I wasn't dead. And I knew I wasn't, because my feet were cold and I was hungry."

"But how did that make you sure?"

"Well, I knew that if I were in heaven I shouldn't be hungry, and if I was in the other place my feet wouldn't be cold."

UP TO HIM

A YOUNG minister unexpectedly called upon to address a Sunday school asked, to gain time:

"Children, what shall I speak about?"

A little girl on the front seat, who was in the habit of reciting at entertainments, had committed to memory several declamations so that she was always prepared for any occasion. Sympathy and interest shone in her face as she held up her hand and in a shrill voice inquired:

"What do you know best?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

PRESENTED

WHICH is the first and most important sacrament?" asked a Sunday-school teacher of a girl preparing for confirmation.

"Marriage," was the prompt response.

"No, baptism is the first and most important sacrament," the teacher corrected.

"Not in our family," said the pupil haughtily; "we are respectable."

BELIEVED IN HIMSELF

SAID the teacher to Willie: "Why, Willie, what are you drawing?"

"I'm drawing a picture of God."

"But, Willie, you mustn't do that; nobody knows how God looks."

Willie smiled confidently: "Well," he said, "they will when I get this done."

IN UNION THERE IS COURAGE

A SOLDIER of Bates' Division of the Confederate Army, after the command had run two days from Nashville, had thrown away his gun and accoutrements and, alone in the woods,

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

sat down and commenced thinking — the first chance he had had for such a thing.

Rolling up his sleeves and looking at his legs and general physique, he thus gave vent to his feelings; "I am whipped, badly whipped, and somewhat demoralized, but no man can say I am scattered."

TAKING NO CHANCES

IN DAWSON CITY a coloured man, Sam Jones by name, was on trial for felony. The judge asked Sam if he desired the appointment of a lawyer to defend him. "No, sah," said Sam. "I'se gwine to throw myself on the ignorance of the cote."

THE PROPER MOMENT

DR. BURTON and Dr. Gage were ministers of two Congregational churches in Hartford, and excellent friends. Dr. Gage had travelled abroad and since his return had been delivering a course of lectures upon Old World subjects. One of the lectures — on Palestine — had been thought not so interesting as the others, and on its second delivery many of the auditors

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

withdrew before it was finished. Not long afterward Dr. Gage's house was entered by a burglar. Dr. Gage was giving Dr. Burton an account of the affair.

"Why, Doctor," he said, "I had him down flat on his back. I held him there. He couldn't move an inch."

"Good!" said Dr. Burton. "But what a splendid opportunity that was to have delivered to him your lecture on Palestine!"

MISSING

A SCHOOL principal was trying to make clear to his class the fundamental doctrines of the Declaration of Independence.

"Now, boys," he said, "I will give you each three ordinary buttons. Here they are. You must think of the first one as representing Life, of the second as representing Liberty, and the third one as representing the Pursuit of Happiness. Next Sunday I will ask you each to produce the three buttons and tell me what they represent."

The following Sunday the teacher said to the youngest member:

"Now, Johnnie, produce your three buttons and tell me what they stand for."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"I ain't got 'em all," he sobbed, holding out two of the buttons. "Here's Life, an' here's Liberty, but mommer sewed the Pursuit o' Happiness on my pants."

FROM HEADQUARTERS

WILLIAM had just returned from college, resplendent in loud-checked trousers, silk hosiery, a fancy waistcoat, a necktie that spoke for itself. He entered the library, where his father was reading. The old gentleman looked up and surveyed his son. The longer he looked the more disgusted he became.

"Son," he finally blurted out, "you look like a silly fool!"

Later the old major who lived next door came in, and greeted the boy heartily.

"William," he said, with undisguised admiration, "you look exactly as your father did twenty-five years ago, when he came back from school."

"Yes," said William, with a smile. "So father was just telling me."

HIS LIMIT

ONE cold, wintry morning a man of tall and angular build was walking down a steep hill at a quick pace. A treacherous piece of

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

ice under the snow caused him to lose control of his feet; he began to slide and was unable to stop.

At a cross street halfway down the decline, he encountered a large heavy woman, with her arms full of bundles. The meeting was sudden, and before either realized it a collision ensued and both were sliding down hill, a grand ensemble — the thin man underneath, the fat woman and bundles on top. When the bottom was reached and the woman was trying in vain to recover her breath and her feet, these faint words were borne to her ear:

"Pardon me, madam, but you will have to get off here. This is as far as I go."

A TRUE AMERICAN

THE coloured sexton of a wealthy church had a very stylish mulatto wife. Finding his domestic income not quite equal to his expenses, he decided to apply for an increase in salary. So he wrote a letter to the committee in charge with this explanation at the close: "It's mighty hard to keep a sealskin wife on a muskrat salary."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

IN THE SAME BOAT

A YOUNG man from New York who had been to Boston discovered himself penniless in that city. Not knowing how else to get back to New York he took a chance and boarded a train. When the conductor came through he told him that he was a reporter for a certain metropolitan newspaper who had been sent to Boston on an assignment. He declared that he had inadvertently mislaid his pass and that he had used all of his money. However, if the conductor would take him through he would repay him the money as soon as they arrived in New York.

"I guess that will be all right," said the conductor. "But, by the way, your editor is in the parlour car. Come up with me and if he says you are a member of his staff I will take you through."

They went up to the parlour car, and to the young man's surprise the editor vouched for him and assured the conductor that everything was correct and legitimate. As soon as the official was out of hearing the young man thanked the editor for his kindness and said:

"Of course you know I'm not connected with

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

your paper, and I was fearfully afraid you'd give me away."

"Young man," said the other, "I am not the editor. I'm only travelling on his pass."

SHORT

THE high-born dame was breaking in a new footman — stupid and honest.

In her brougham, about to make a round of visits, she found she had forgotten her bits of pasteboard. So she sent the man back with orders to bring some of her cards that were on the mantelpiece in her boudoir, and put them in his pocket.

At different houses, she told the footman to hand in one, and sometimes a couple, until at last she told James to leave three at one house.

"Can't do it, mum."

"How's that?"

"I've only got two left — the ace of spades and the seven of clubs!"

TOO FAR

THEY were arguing about the alleged inborn strain of deceitfulness in woman, and she retaliated by citing the instances of men deceiving their wives.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"I suppose," said he, "that you hold that a man should never deceive his wife."

"Oh, no!" she smiled back at him. "I shouldn't go so far as that. How would it be possible for the average man to get a wife if he didn't deceive her?"

GASTRONOMICAL

THE fifth day drew to its close with the twelfth juryman still unconvinced. The court was impatient.

"Well, gentlemen," said the court officer, entering the jury room, "shall I, as usual, order twelve dinners?"

"Make it," said the foreman, "eleven dinners and a bale of hay."

WHY NOT?

WHILE waiting for the speaker at a public meeting a pale little man in the audience seemed very nervous. He glanced over his shoulder from time to time and shifted about in his seat. At last he arose and demanded in a high, penetrating voice, "Is there a Christian Scientist in this room?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

A woman at the other side of the hall got up and said: "I am a Christian Scientist."

"Well, then, madam," requested the little man, "would you mind changing seats with me? I'm sitting in a draught."

DISPROVED

AN ALABAMA man, meeting an old darky formerly in his service, put to him the usual question: "Well, Jed, how are you to-day?"

"To'able, sah, tol'able," cautiously replied Jed. "Ah'd be all right, sah, if it wan't for de rheumatism in mah right laig."

"Ah, well, Jed, we mustn't complain. We're all getting old, and old age does not come alone."

"Old age ain't got nuthin' to do wid it, sah. Heah's mah other laig just as old, an' dat's sound an' soople as kin be!"

A CRITICAL MOMENT

COLONEL POPGUN was over in Dublin for the holidays, and found himself with only ten minutes to catch the steamer to England. He hastily hailed a "jarvey," and declared he would give him ten shillings if he performed

the journey in time. The jarvey replied he couldn't do it, albeit his steed was an old war-horse.

"War-horse!" sniffed the colonel. "Here, give me the reins, and I'll do it myself!" So saying, he jumped on the side of the jaunting car and cried, "Charge!" When he got to the boat, just in time, he cried, "Halt!"

The next year he happened to be in the same plight and told the same jarvey to drive him in ten minutes to the quay.

"Charge," shouted the man with the reins, and off they went at a rattling pace. But Paddy forgot what to say to stop the animal. "Jump, yer honour," he cried. "I've forgot the password!"

NO EXCUSE

I CAN'T keep the visitors from coming up," said the office boy dejectedly to the editor. "When I say you're out they don't believe me. They say they must see you."

"Well," said the editor, "just tell them that's what they all say. I don't care if you 'cheek' them, but I must have quietness."

That afternoon there called at the office a lady. She wanted to see the editor, and the boy assured her that it was impossible.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"But I must see him!" she protested. "I'm his wife!"

\ "That's what they all say," replied the boy.

PROBING THE PAST

TOMMY had been punished. "Mamma," he sobbed, "did your mamma whip you when you were little?"

"Yes, when I was naughty."

"And did her mamma whip her when she was little?"

"Yes, Tommy."

"And was she whipped when she was little?"

"Yes."

"Well, who started the darned thing, anyway?"

A UNIVERSAL FEELING

PAT: Moike, why is kissin' your gurril loike a bottle ov olives?

Moike: Giv it up.

Pat: Cause ef yez can git one the rest come aisy.

RAPID FIRE

A SCHOOLMASTER, wishing to impress upon his class the great population of China, said: "The population of China is so

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

great that two Chinamen die every time you take a breath."

This information made a deep impression upon his young pupils, particularly one small boy at the foot of the class. His face was flushed, and he was puffing furiously.

"What is the matter?" inquired the school-master with alarm. "What on earth are you doing, Tommy?"

"Killing Chinamen, sir," was the answer.

N E R V E

THE nerviest individual that ever I encountered," said ex-Senator Mason of Illinois, "was a chap that dashed into an accommodation train running from Chicago to Evanston on an occasion when I was occupying a seat near the door.

"Just before this person appeared in my car the other passenger or two and myself had heard a yelling in the train shed, in the confusion of which we heard some one shout, 'Stop, thief!'

"Well, when this person did scamper into my car he looked about for an instant with every appearance of a hunted animal. Then he dived under my seat, exclaiming:

"'Sir, I rely upon your honour!'"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

CORRECTED

A YOUNG man had been calling now and then on a young lady, when one night, as he sat in the parlour waiting for her to come down, her mother entered the room instead and asked him in a very grave, stern way what his intentions were.

He turned very red and was about to stammer some incoherent reply when suddenly the young lady called down from the head of the stairs:

\ “Mamma, mamma, that is not the one.”

A CASE IN POINT

JOHNNIE,” said a teacher in a physiology class, “can you give a familiar example of the human body as it adapts itself to changed conditions?”

“Yes-sum,” said Johnnie, “my aunt gained fifty pounds in a year, and her skin never cracked.”

TEDIOUS

A WELL-KNOWN clubman of Boston was married during the early part of last winter to a charming college girl, who, of her many accomplishments, is proudest of her cooking.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

Her husband, returning late one afternoon to his home, was surprised to find his wife "all tired out."

"You look dreadfully fatigued, little one," said he in a sympathetic tone.

"I am," was her reply. "You see, dear, I heard you say that you like broiled rabbit. So I meant to surprise you with one for dinner; but I've been hard at work on the rabbit all day, and I haven't got it more than half picked."

BONES

Essay by a School Boy

BONES is the lattice work on whitch the body grows. If you didn't have sum bones, you would be shaped like a custard py. If I didn't have no bones, I wouldn't have so mutch shape as I now have, and I would not have so mutch motion, and teacher would be pleased, but I like to have motion, 'specially in this pay-as-you-enter suit Ma hired for me. Bones gimme motion, because they are somethin' hard for motion to cling to. If I had no bones, my brane, lungs, heart and blood would be lyin' around loose in me, all mixed up like the readin'

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

mater in a yellow journal, and I would get hurted, but now only my bones get hurted. If my bones wuz stuck together with wire in the right places, it would make a skeletum. I am mighty glad my skeletum was put on the *inside* before I wuz finished, 'cause it looks better there. If my bones wuz on the outside, an' I fell down, I would brake everything in the place. Some animals wear their skeletums on the outside. I'm glad I ain't them animals. Onct I went to the sircus and seen a Livin' Skeletum. He looked like his folks didn't keep house but boarded sum place.

If my bones wuz burned, I should be brittle because it would take all the animal out of me. If I wuz soaked in acid, I should be limber. Teacher showed me a bone that had been soaked, and I could bend it. I should rather be soaked than burned.

There is a grate menny different kinds of bones. There is the Crazy bone, the Wish bone, the Soup bone, the Trombone, the Bone Spavin and the Back bone. The backbone is — the back bone is sit — the back bone is situ — the back-bone is situa — the backbone is sitcher-e-vated just inside the peel on the other side from the front side and is filled with rubber.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

The backbone is made up of humps, with places in between where the humps is left out. ("See that hump?") When your skates fly out in front, and you sit down on the ice, one end of the backbone is at the lowest side of the head, if it don't punch up thru', and the other end is at the upper side of the ice.

There is another bone called the Skull. The skull has humps, too. *Sometimes* there is branes on the inside of the skull.

Bones don't grow solid like the limbs on a tree, 'cause they have joints. Joints is good things to have in bones. There is a good menny kinds of joints. They grease themselves and don't squeak. You can move 'cause you have joints. There is a joint that don't seem like a joint. It is in the skull. It has to be there to occupy the branes and let the head out in the mornin', 'cause sum men no more in the mornin' than they did the nite before comin' home in the in tox-i-cab.

There is a kind of fish kalled a Shad, that tastes just like a paper of pins. It is all bones except the part they don't cook and throw away.

The bones that hold your lungs in are kalled slats. They run around you East and West, but girls wears bones running North and South.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

The Board of Ill-Health was a-meetin' one nite an' they heard an' awful rattlin' a-comin' down the Avenoo, and the President says, "that sounds to me like a skeletum comin'," so they all rushed to the window. It was a Milk Wagon, and skeered 'em worse'n if it was a skeletum. The Board of Ill-Health says — "Milk is no good unless the cow is regularly baptized," but the milk man says — "If a cow is clean and healthy, it don't make no difference if she hain't no deep religious convicshuns, so long as she leads a *moral* life." *Yes, sirree.*

When bones is ground up fine, they make a good fertilizer. It gives me a lonesome, scattered feelin', and brings tears to my eyes — to think that *I* might be used on an onion patch.

Sum folks, when living, killed everything they touched, and it would not be safe to use the bones of them kind of people for vegetables.

THAT'S ALL

TROUBLE ENOUGH

IN ONE of his famous after-dinner speeches Horace Porter once told this story:

After having wrestled with about thirty dishes at this dinner, and after all this, being called upon

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

to speak, I feel a great sympathy with that woman in Ireland who had had something of a field-day on hand. She began by knocking down two somewhat unpopular agents of her absentee-landlord, and was seen later in the day dancing a jig on the stomach of the prostrate form of the Presbyterian minister. One of her friends admired her prowess in this direction and invited her in and gave her a good stiff glass of whiskey. Her friend said, "Shall I pour some water in your whiskey?" and the woman replied, "For God's sake, haven't I had trouble enough already to-day?"

PATIENT TOMMY

TOMMY," said a young lady visitor at his home, "why not come to our Sabbath school? Several of your little friends have joined us lately."

Tommy hesitated a moment. Then suddenly he exclaimed: "Does a red-headed kid by the name of Jimmy Brown go to your school?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the new teacher.

"Well, then," said Tommy, with an air of interest, "I'll be there next Sunday, you bet. I've been layin' for that kid for three weeks, and never knew where to find him."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

HETEROGENEOUS

IN ANSWER to the lady's advertisement for a laundress, Ellen a darky, black as the ace of spades, applied for the work. With her was a group of small darkies, some black, some brown, and some yellow. Her employer asked if all these children were Ellen's. The latter replied:

"Yas'm, they's all mine."

"But, Ellen," said the lady, "they are all different colours."

"Yas'm; you see, it's like dis. My first husband was black like me, my secon' was brown, an' the one I got now he belongs to the fair sex."

A USEFUL CITIZEN

PETER BUCK recovered from his long siege of typhoid fever and began circulating among his old friends and receiving their congratulations. That is, those who recognized him congratulated him. Before he was ill Pete weighed 220 pounds easy; now his clothes don't fit him, and when he stands on the platform and drops a penny in the slot the little pointer stops at 130.

"Well, well," said a friend, "where's your bay-window, Buck? I'll bet a fellow could count your ribs."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Count my ribs?" repeated Buck, ruefully. "Let me tell you something, Charlie. On Mondays I get into the stationary tub and my wife uses me for a washboard."

THE SIMPLE LIFE

IN THE smoking-car the conversation turned to the merits and demerits of various ways of preserving health. One stout, florid man held forth with great eloquence on the subject.

"Look at me!" he said. "Never a day's sickness in my life, and all due to simple food. Why, gentlemen," he continued, "from the age of twenty to that of forty I lived an absolutely simple regular life — no effeminate delicacies, no late hours, no extravagances. Every day, in fact, summer and winter, I was in bed regularly at nine o'clock and up again at five in the morning. I worked from eight to one, then had dinner — a plain dinner, mark my words: after that an hour's exercise; then ——"

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted the facetious stranger in the corner, "but what were you in for?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

A SITTING STRUT

WILLIAM TRAVERS JEROME, district attorney of New York, went down to Georgia to address the Georgia Bar Association.

Colonel Peter Meldrim was showing Jerome about.

"You see that man," said the colonel, pointing out a distinguished person who sat on the hotel porch.

"I do."

"Well, suh, that is a man in whom our state takes great pride. He is Judge — , suh, the only man in Georgia who can strut sitting down."

A CANNY MINISTER

A NEWLY appointed Scottish minister on his first Sunday of office had reason to complain of the poorness of the collection.

"Mon," replied one of the elders, "they are close—vera close. But," confidentially, "the auld meenister he put three or four saxpence into the plate hissel', just to gie them a start. Of course, he took the saxpence awa' with him afterward."

The new minister tried the same plan, but the next Sunday he again had to report a dismal failure. The total collection was not only small,

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

but he was grieved to find that his own sixpences were missing.

"Ye may be a better preacher than the auld meenister," exclaimed the elder, "but if ye had half the knowledge o' the world, an' o' yer ain flock in particular, ye'd ha' done what he did an' glued the saxpences to the plate."

SUPPLYING ALL DEMANDS

AN EVANGELIST was exhorting his hearers to flee from the wrath to come. "I warn you," he thundered, "that there will be weeping, and wailing and gnashing of teeth!"

At this moment an old woman in the gallery stood up. "Sir," she shouted, "I have no teeth."

"Madam," returned the evangelist, "teeth will be provided."

KEEPING THE NEWS FROM JOHNNY

THERE was a couple who had two children, a boy of sixteen and a girl of fourteen. About that time of life another baby came along. With that prudishness so commonly found, the parents took the greatest pains that the children should not know anything about the conditions of their mother or the impending event, and when the

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

time approached the girl was sent on a vacation to some relatives in another city. At last the great event took place, and the father came and said to the boy:

"Johnny, you have a new baby brother."

The boy said nothing. The father sat down at his desk and in a few moments handed the boy a telegram.

"Take that to the telegraph office," he said, "and send it to sister. Here is a dollar to pay the charges."

The boy came back after a while and handed his father the change.

"What," said the father, "that telegram cost more than 35 cents, didn't it?"

"Oh, yes," the boy replied, "the one you wrote would have cost more. I sent one of my own."

"You did," the father said, "and what did you say?"

"Oh," the lad replied, "I just wired sister: 'I win, it's a boy.'"

RESIGNED

THE wealthy old lady was very ill and sent for her lawyer to make her will.

"I wish to explain to you," she said weakly, "about disposing of my property."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

The lawyer was sympathetic. "There, there, don't worry about it," he said soothingly; "just leave it to me."

"Oh, well," said the old lady resignedly, "I suppose I might as well. You'll get it anyway."

AN EXTENSIVE RECORD

A CHICAGO man who has a son at Cornell took occasion while on the way home from New York recently to stop off for the purpose of seeing how the boy was getting along. It happened to be just after the Cornell football team, which has undergone many humiliating experiences this season, had been beaten by Colgate.

"How are things going with the football team?" the father asked, pretending to be seeking information.

"The Cornell football team!" the young man exclaimed with all the disgust that he could put into his tones; "it has been beaten by everything except the Colonial Dames!"

BACKED BY THE BIBLE

MR. RUNDLETT, at one time a merchant in the town of New Castle, Me., instructed his clerks to strictly follow the precepts of the Bible in all of their dealings.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

One day a lady came in to buy a piece of dress goods, and one of the clerks spent a great deal of time showing her various cloths, which she said weren't good enough. The clerk said he had a better piece in the rear of the store. He showed her this piece, which she had already seen, but told her it was much finer and worth 50 cents a yard more. She said that she could readily see that it was better and made her purchase.

Mr. Rundlett, who had seen the transaction, censured the clerk, who replied that he could refer to the Bible to justify his action.

"Why, how is that?"

"Well, she was a stranger, and I took her in."

CONTINUOUS

A VERY prominent man recently died and shortly after a friend of the family called to condole with the widow. The caller had been a very warm friend of the deceased, and as he was about to depart he asked:

"Did Will leave you much?"

"Oh, yes, indeed," replied the widow, "nearly every night."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

HE KNEW

IT WAS in a Kansas City club that this happened, and they were all young men. Three or four of them were home from Yale for the summer vacation, and the collegians had just been introduced to a quiet young man of twenty-five. The quiet young man dropped a remark showing familiarity with the campuses.

"Oh," said the leader of the Yale crowd, with a touch of surprise in his voice, "are you a college man?"

"Yes," said the quiet young man, "I was graduated from K. U. three years ago."

"Oh, yes," said the Yale man, with cheery condescension, "to be sure. Nice little school that. I've been in Lawrence once or twice. We're all from Yale ourselves, you know."

"Yes," the K. U. man told them quietly: "I've heard quite a bit about New Haven. I have fourteen Yale men working for me."

A BLUE RIBBONER

A MINISTER, walking along the street one day, saw a crowd of boys sitting in a ring, with a small dog in the centre. When he came up to them he asked:

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"What are you doing to the dog?"

One little boy said, "Whoever tells the biggest lie wins it."

"I am surprised at you little boys, for when I was like you I never told a lie."

There was a silence for a while, until one of the boys shouted, "Hand him up the dog!"

EXTRAVAGANT?

ROSCOE CONKLING came into Charles O'Connor's office one day in quite a nervous state.

"You seem to be very much excited, Mr. Conkling," said Mr. O'Connor, as Roscoe walked up and down the room.

"Yes, I'm provoked — I am provoked," said Mr. Conkling; "I never had a client dissatisfied about my fee before."

"Well, what's the matter?" asked O'Connor.

"Why, I defended Gibbons for arson, you know. He was convicted, but I did hard work for him. I took him to the superior court and he was convicted; then to the supreme court, and the supreme court confirmed the judgment and gave him ten years. I charged him six hundred dollars, and Gibbons is grumbling about it — says

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

it is too much. Now, Mr. O'Connor, I ask you, was that too much?"

"Well," said O'Connor, very deliberately, "of course you did a great deal of work, and six hundred dollars is not a big fee; but to be frank with you, Mr. Conkling, my deliberate opinion is that he might have been convicted for less money."

UNANSWERABLE

A TEACHER was giving a lesson on the circulation of the blood. Trying to make the matter clearer, he said: "Now, boys, if I stood on my head the blood, as you know, would run into it, and I should turn red in the face."

"Yes, sir," said the boys.

"Then why is it that while I am standing upright in the ordinary position the blood doesn't run into my feet?"

A little fellow shouted, "'Cause yer feet ain't empty."

LITERARY STYLE?

LITERARY style, according to some critics, is unimportant. But isn't it? Here is an essay composed by a boy of nine on Cromwell:

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Cromwell was a wicked man, and killed lots of men. He had a nose of copper hew, under which dwelt a truly religious soul."

REVERSION TO TYPE

AN ENGLISH traveller in Baluchistan had from a holy man in that country a story about Moses, which does not appear in the Scriptures, yet which has its pertinence to this matter of politicians proposing to do away with all the evils of the human lot.

The patriarch was sitting in his house very sad, and the Lord said to him: "Prophet Moses, why art thou cast down?"

"Alas!" said he, "I see so many people sorrowful. Some are unclothed, and some are hungry. I pray Thee make all happy and contented."

The Lord promised it should be so. But soon Moses was again disconsolate, and once more the Lord asked the cause.

"Lord," cried the prophet, "the upper story of my house has fallen down, and nobody will come to mend it; they are all too busy enjoying themselves."

"But what I am to do?"

"Lord, make the people as they were before!"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

LOSING HIS SELF-CONFIDENCE

JOSEPH JEFFERSON, the actor, once told this story to a friend:

"I was coming down the elevator of the Stock Exchange building, and at one of the intermediate floors a man whose face I knew as well as I know yours got in. He greeted me very warmly at once, said it was a number of years since we had met, and was very gracious and friendly, but I couldn't place him for the life of me. I asked him as a sort of feeler how he happened to be in New York, and he answered, with a touch of surprise, that he had lived there for several years. Finally, I told him in an apologetic way that I couldn't recall his name. He looked at me for a moment and then he said very quietly that his name was U. S. Grant."

"What did you do, Joe?" his friend asked.

"Do?" he replied, with a characteristic smile. "Why, I got out at the next floor for fear I'd ask him if he had ever been in the war!"

REPARTEE

FATHER KELLY and Rabbi Levi were seated opposite each other at a banquet where some delicious roast ham was served, and Father Kelly

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

made comments upon its flavour. Presently he leaned forward, and in a voice that carried far he addressed his friend:

"Rabbi Levi, when are you going to become liberal enough to eat ham?"

"At your wedding, Father Kelly," retorted the rabbi.

A PRINTER up in Canada is said to be one hundred and three years old. He has made so many typographical errors during his career that he is afraid to die.

CAUSE FOR REJOICING

[This little dialogue originated with Philip Welch, one of the most prolific writers of jokes in this country. It was published in the New York Sun and has since become, in various modified forms, a stock acquaintance.]

DOCTOR," said the sick man, "the other physicians who have been in consultation over my case seem to differ with you in the diagnosis."

"I know they do," replied the doctor, who had great confidence in himself, "but the autopsy will show who was right."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

NO MORAL TO THIS

I WAS a clerk in a grocery store, at \$9 a week," he said, "but like many other young men I fell in with dissolute companions and was induced to gamble."

"And was tempted to take money which did not belong to you?"

"No. I won enough in a week to buy the grocery."

PRIDE IN HIS PROFESSION

YOUNG Housekeeper (timidly): Isn't fourteen cents rather high for turkey? I am sure that the price across the way is only thirteen.

Butcher: With the feet on?

Housekeeper: No-o, I think the feet are cut off.

Butcher (with a superior smile): I thought so. When we sell a turkey, ma'am, we sell it feet and all.

NO RED TAPE

TWO ladies made a formal call on a distant acquaintance. The maid asked them to wait until she ascertained whether the person inquired for was in. Presently she tripped down-

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

stairs, and announced that "the lady was not at home." One of the callers, finding that she had forgotten her cards, said to her friend: "Let me write my name on your card."

"Oh, it isn't at all necessary, miss," put in the maid, cheerfully, "I told her who it was!"

TIT FOR TAT

AMONG the advertisements in a German paper appeared the following: "The gentleman who found a purse with money in the Blumenstrasse is requested to forward it to the address of the loser, as he is recognized."

A few days afterward the reply was inserted: "The recognized gentleman who picked up a purse in the Blumenstrasse requests the loser to call at his house."

DEAR! DEAR!

ALITTLE boy whose sprained wrist has been relieved by bathing in whiskey surprised his mother by asking: "Did papa ever sprain his throat when he was a boy?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

FICKLE MEMORY

A WEALTHY citizen of a neighbouring city had been out until the small hours with convivial companions. It was not exactly a "dry locality" that he had visited, and he arrived home slightly exhilarated. He managed, by describing several erratic rather than geometrical lines, to get to his bedroom and into a chair. Then he called to his wife in a stage whisper:

"I can't get my boots off."

"What's the matter with your boots?"

"Nozzin'," in a faint whisper.

"What's the matter with your hands, then?" she cross-examined.

"Nozzin'."

"Why don't you pull your boots off, then?"

"Maria, I've forgot the combination!"

SOME GROWN UPS FEEL THIS WAY

IT WAS a little girl at Malden, who, having been naughty, and having received a punishment from her mother, said this prayer fervently when she went to bed that night:

"O God, please make me good; not real good, but just good enough so I won't have to be whipped."

'THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

TALLY!

L PILOT ROGERS, of the wrecked steamer *Cambridge*, says: "I knew when we struck just where we were!" This reminds one of the Irish pilot who boasted that he knew every rock on the coast, and the ship just then striking one, added, "and that's one of 'em."

WHAT WAS THE USE?

A RECENT lesson in the Sabbath school was on the death of Elisha, and when one of the scholars came to the clause, "they buried him," the teacher asked: "Why did they not cremate him? Do you think there is any encouragement in the Bible for cremation?"

"No encouragement whatever," was the reply. "They tried it on the three that were cast into the fiery furnace, and didn't make it work."

NEGATIVE

IT IS related that a certain German maiden once presided at a mineral-water fountain, at which there were only two kinds of syrup — vanilla and lemon. To her came a young man,

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

who said: "I want a glass of soda without syrup."

"Ja," replied Katrina: "Boot vat kind of sirop you vant him mitout — mitout vanilla or mitout lemon?"

RUBBING IT IN

A LITTLE boy came running in from outdoors, crying because he had been stung by a bee. "Mamma," he sobbed, "I'd just as lief the bees'd walk on me, but I don't like to have 'em sit down."

DIRECTIONS

HERR PUMPGERN and His Tailor. — Herr Pumpgern still lies in bed. A knock at the door.

"Come in!"

Herr Pumpgern's tailor steps into the room.

"Ah, it's you, Herr Stickle! I suppose you have brought my account!"

"I make so bold, Herr Pumpgern; you see I am rather short of money."

"Short of money, are you? Just open my desk yonder — see that drawer?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

Herr Stickle opens a drawer; it is empty. Then Herr Pumpgern says:

"Not this; the other one."

Herr Stickle opens a second drawer — empty, too. Herr Pumpgern observes:

"I do not mean that one; it's the one below."

Herr Stickle obeys.

"Well, what do you see in it?" asks Herr Pumpgern.

"A pile of papers, nothing besides," is his reply.

"That's the one — those are my bills. Place yours on the top of the rest," replied Herr Pumpgern cheerfully, and adding, "Good morning, Herr Stickle," he calmly turned on his other side.

THE ONLY WAY

MISS DRESSWELL had just returned after spending a week with a country friend. Imagine her consternation when she discovered her previously well-stocked wardrobe empty.

"Gracious, George," she said to her brother, "where are all my clothes? And what in the world is that great black patch on the lawn?"

The face of George exhibited all the well-

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

known signs of conscious righteousness, and he met her gaze unflinchingly. "Maria," he replied consolingly, "you wrote to me that if I wanted the key of the billiard room I should find it in the pocket of your bolero."

"Yes, yes!"

"Well, I don't know a bolero from a fichu or a box-plait, so I took all the things to the lawn and burned them. Then I recovered the key from the ashes."

NUMEROUS

ANY quails about this neighbourhood?" inquired a tourist as he was about to register at a Lake George hotel.

"Quail!" said the proprietor with an indulgent smile, "they have got to be a nuisance. The cook complains that he can't throw a piece of refuse toast out of the back window but that four or five fat quail fight to see which one shall lie down on it."

UPSIDE DOWN

A BACHELOR who lived near Paris managed to secure much amusement out of a "topsy-turvy room," which he had built in his house. A gentleman, who was one of a stag party that

visited him from Saturday to Monday, says: "When we woke up, about two o'clock, on Sunday morning, after a jolly evening, one of our number, sound asleep on the couch in the billiard-room, was carried out like a log by a couple of servants. My host gave me a solemn wink, and told me that if a sudden summons came I was to rush from my bedroom, or else I might miss a sight worth seeing. I wanted nothing but sleep — and was relieved when the summons came to find that it was broad daylight. Yawning, I followed the valet, and found myself, with four others, silently peeping through little holes in a wall. The scene was absurd, ridiculous. A dazed man, slowly waking to full consciousness, was lying on a plastered floor, looking up in horror at a carpeted ceiling. Two heavy couches, an easy-chair, chairs and tables, securely fastened, stared down at him from above. The man's eyes at last rested on a flowerpot directly over his head, from which a flaring rose — apparently real — was blooming. He gave a cry, and, rolling over, grasped with frenzied hands the stem of the chandelier which came through the floor. The host burst into the room with a loud laugh. "They all do it," he cried, "they fear they will fall up to the ceiling."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

DRAWING THE LINE

A DOCTOR of Divinity, on his way home to dinner one day, meeting one of the divinity students, cordially invited the young man to accompany him, adding that he did not know as there would be much to eat. The invitation was accepted, and immediately upon being seated at table the doctor commenced carving a boiled ham that was doing duty for the second or third time.

"Why, my dear," exclaimed his wife in surprise, "you have forgotten something. You have not asked the blessing."

"Yes, I have, too," bluffly responded the doctor. "I've asked the Lord to bless this old ham all I'm going to."

NOT ALL WASTED

TO TOP off an expensive education a young married woman of no particular ability in any one line took a course at a dramatic school. She never attempted to secure an engagement, so one day a close and candid friend of her husband asked what good all that training had done anyway.

"So far as I can see," he said, "that \$300 you

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD
spent on Ethel's dramatic education has been practically thrown away."

"Oh, no, it hasn't," returned the husband mildly. "Her stage experience has taught her to dress in a hurry. Nowadays when I ask her to go any place with me, she can change her clothes in ten minutes. It used to take over an hour."

WHY THE CASE WAS DISMISSED

A YOUNG man had been arrested for kissing a pretty girl, and she was on the witness stand.

"You say," said the attorney for the defendant, "that the young man kissed you against your will?"

"Yes, he did, and he did it a dozen times, too."

"Well, now, is it not true that you also kissed him during the affray?"

Objected to: Objection overruled.

"Now answer my question," continued the attorney. "Did you not kiss the defendant also?"

"Yes, I did," replied the witness indignantly, "but it was in self-defence."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

IN WRONG

A SELF-CONSCIOUS and egotistical young clergyman was supplying the pulpit of a country church. After the service he asked one of the deacons, a grizzled, plain-spoken man, what he thought of his morning effort.

"Waal," answered the old man slowly, "I'll tell ye in a kind of parable. I remember Tunk Weatherbee's fust deer hunt, when he was green. He follered the deer's tracks all right, but he follered 'em all day in the wrong direction."

COMPARISONS ARE SOMETIMES EMBARRASSING

SENATOR BORAH was talking at a dinner in Boise about an embarrassing question that had been asked at Chicago.

"The question," he said, smiling, "went unanswered. It was like little Willie's query: A young gentleman was spending the week-end at little Willie's cottage at Atlantic City, and on Sunday evening after dinner, there being a scarcity of chairs on the crowded piazza, the young gentleman took Willie on his lap. Then during a pause in the conversation little Willie

looked up at the young gentleman and piped: 'Am I as heavy as sister Mabel?'"

PROTECTION

A TRAVELLER on a freezing January night called at an inn, but found it full.

"Well, landlord," he said, "I can't sleep out on the snow crust. You must put me up somehow."

"I guess, then," said the landlord, "we'll make up a bed in the hall and curtain it off for you." Accordingly this was done. And the traveller, under a rather thick blanket, fell asleep. But in the middle of the night he awoke, freezing. An icy draught blew through his hair and moustache; it even lifted his thick blanket and swept over his bare legs. The traveller arose. The sheet that had been hung up as a partition had come unfastened, and it was waving merrily in the breeze.

"Landlord!" shouted the traveller. "Landlord!"

"What is it?" a voice shouted back.

"Landlord," said the traveller, "will you please let me have a paper of pins to lock my bedroom door with?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

DEFINED

A CERTAIN Congressman had disastrous experience in gold-mine speculations. One day a number of colleagues were discussing the subject of speculation, when one of them said to this Western member:

"Old chap, as an expert, give us a definition of the term 'bonanza.'"

"A 'bonanza,' replied the Western man with emphasis, "is a hole in the ground owned by a champion liar!"

UP TO HIM

IN SPITE of the reputation for latitudinarianism he gained from his early trial for heresy, Professor Jowett, of Oxford, was intolerant of pretentiousness and shallow conceit. One self-satisfied undergraduate met the master one day.

"Master," he said, "I have searched everywhere in all philosophies, ancient and modern, and nowhere do I find the evidence of a God."

"Mr. ——" replied the master, after a shorter pause than usual, "if you don't find a God by five o'clock this afternoon you must leave this college."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

TOO LATE

AMONG the new class which came to the second-grade teacher, a young, timid girl, was one Tommy, who for naughty deeds had been many times spanked by his first-grade teacher. "Send him to me any time when you want him spanked," suggested the latter; "I can manage him."

One morning about a week after this conversation Tommy appeared at the first-grade teacher's door. She dropped her work, seized him by the arm, dragged him to the dressing-room, turned him over her knee and did her duty.

When she had finished she said: "Well, Tommy, what have you to say?"

"Please, miss, my teacher wants the scissors."

PUTTING THE QUESTION

AFAMOUS criminal lawyer had won a shockingly bad case by eloquence and trickery, and a rival lawyer said to him bitterly:

"Is there any case so low, so foul, so vilely crooked and shameful that you'd refuse it?"

"Well, I don't know," the other answered with a smile. "What have you been doing now?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

THAT SETTLED IT

OLD Shah-bah-shong, the head chief of Mille Lac, brought all his warriors to defend Fort Ripley in 1862. The Secretary of the Interior and the governor and the legislature of Minnesota promised these Indians that for this act of bravery they should have the special care of the government and never be removed. A few years later, a special agent was sent from Washington to ask the Ojibways to cede their lands and remove to a country north of Leech Lake. The agent called the Indians in council and said:

"My red brothers, your great father has heard how you have been wronged. He said, 'I will send them an honest man.' He looked in the North, the South, the East, and the West. When he saw me, he said, 'This is the honest man who I will send to my red children.' Brothers look at me! The winds of fifty-two years have blown over my head and silvered it over with gray, and in all that time I have never done wrong to any man. As your friend, I ask you to sign this treaty." Old Shah-bah-shong sprang to his feet and said:

"My friend, look at me! The winds of more than fifty winters have blown over my head and silvered it with gray; but they have not blown my brains away." The council was ended.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

SUSPICIOUS

ONCE when Lionel Brough gave his humorous entertainment at a northern lunatic asylum, he spent the hour he had to wait for his train in playing one of the inmates, a harmless old gentleman, a game of billiards. Mr. Brough offered the patient 40 in 100, and was beaten easily.

"If you go about giving odds like that," said the patient, "they'll put you in here with me."

MATERIAL

RIGGS and Briggs are two Montreal citizens, more or less interested in municipal affairs. They differ on several burning questions, but unite in a strong dislike for O'Flaherty (which is not the gentleman's name). The same O'Flaherty has a positive gift for manipulating votes and is capable of looking after a larger band of the "faithful" than any other Montreal politician.

"It's men like O'Flaherty who give this city a bad name," said Riggs warmly. "He's got no principles at all. In fact, he doesn't think of anything but getting his men in."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

. "That's so," responded Briggs. "If I had a conscience as elastic as O'Flaherty's, I'd make it into a rubber trust."

TURNING THE TABLES

AN EMINENT lawyer was once cross-examining a very clever woman, mother of the plaintiff, in a breach of promise action, and was completely worsted in the encounter of wits. At the close, however, he turned to the jury and exclaimed:

"You saw, gentlemen, that even I was but a child in her hands. What must my client have been?" By this adroit stroke of advocacy he turned his failure into a success.

BISMARCK TO THE RESCUE

BISMARCK and a friend were out hunting one day, when the friend incautiously walked off into a morass, and feeling himself gradually sinking, called out to Bismarck:

"For God's sake, come to my help, or I shall be lost in this quicksand."

Bismarck saw the danger was great, but he retained his presence of mind.

"No," cried Bismarck, "I will not venture into the morass, for then I should be lost, too. It is evident your end is inevitable; therefore, to relieve you from the cruel agony of slow death, I will shoot you." And he coolly levelled his rifle at his floundering friend.

"Keep quiet," cried Bismarck; "I cannot take correct aim. Remember, that in order to put you at once out of misery I must shoot you through the head!" The shocking brutality of this suggestion drove all fear of the morass out of the friend's mind; the unlucky man thought only of dodging Bismarck's bullet, and, with this in mind, he struggled so violently that finally, by almost superhuman effort, he succeeded in laying hold of the root of an old tree and thereby he rescued himself.

"It was your presence of mind that saved me," he confessed to Bismarck.

SATIRE

JACOB A. RIIS was talking about witty newspaper headlines.

"As witty a headline as I know of," said he, "was written by a youth of eighteen in a San Francisco newspaper office. There was a bill

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

up to prohibit the sale of alcoholic drinks within four miles of the University of California, and this bill the youth headed: 'An Act to Promote Pedestrianism Among our Students.'"

THE WAY IT BEGAN

ACCORDING to the story, widely believed throughout Islam, a dog approached Allah while the latter was engaged in the construction of Eve, and seizing the rib which the Almighty had just taken from Adam's side ran off with it. Allah, it is said, followed in hot pursuit and managed to grasp the tail, which the dog had neglected to tuck away. The tail remained in Allah's hands, the dog escaping with the rib. Allah thereupon, *faute de mieux*, utilized the dog's tail instead of Adam's rib for the construction of the mother of mankind, and it is owing to this, according to the Arabs, that woman is just as incapable of remaining quiet and motionless for two minutes together as is the tail of a dog.

A NEW EXPERIENCE

A SPIRITUALIST had died," said Chauncey Depew, "and his friends came to a clergyman and asked him to preach a funeral sermon, even though that was in conflict with their

tenets. And he did so, as best he could. And when he got through, the widow arose, announced that she had a communication from the deceased, and proceeded to tear the clergyman, his sermon, and his sentiments to ribbons.

“‘I’m mighty sorry,’ said the spiritualist leader.

“‘I’m not,’ said the clergyman. ‘I’ve preached many a funeral sermon, but this is the first time I was ever sassed by the corpse.’”

THE GOLDEN MOMENT OVER

A CERTAIN lady in Paris gives periodical dinners, at which assemble most of the best-known wits and literati of the day. The rule of the mansion is that while one person discourses no interruption whatever can be permitted. It is said that M. Renan once attended one of these dinners, and, being in excellent vein, talked without a break during the whole repast. Toward the end of the dinner, a guest was heard to commence a sentence; but he was instantly silenced by the hostess. After they had left the table, however, she at once informed the extinguished individual that, as M. Renan had now finished his conversation, she would gladly

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

hear what he had to say. The guest modestly declined; the hostess insisted.

"I am certain it was something of consequence," she said.

"Alas, madame," he answered, "it was, indeed; but now it is too late. I should have liked a little more of that iced pudding."

HIS POSITION

A. H. McCOY, the whist champion of Baltimore, discussed at a dinner those overconfident and foolish persons who think they can learn whist in a year or two. "Such persons should be called to order," Mr. McCoy said, sternly. "I for one am always glad to see them called to order."

A young greenhorn stood behind my partner during a game one night.

At the end of the hand the greenhorn said: "Why didn't you lead hearts? That's what I'd have done."

My partner smiled and answered: "Ah, but you, my young friend, have the world before you and none but yourself to consider. You have no wife and family dependent upon you for bread, and if you lose heavily no one suffers but

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

yourself. With me it is different. Hence I led spades."

FAITH

THE story is told of the Rev. James Patterson of Philadelphia, that he once said, in a circle of his brethren, that he thought ministers ought to be humble and poor, like their Master

"I have often prayed," said he, "that I might be kept humble; I never prayed that I might be poor — I could trust my church for that!"

NO GETTING AWAY

DURING the Revolutionary War, an Irishman in the American service, having come by surprise on a small party of Hessians, who were foraging, seized their arms which they had laid aside. He then presented his musket, and with threats drove them before him into the American camp, where the singularity of the exploit occasioning some wonder, he was brought with his prisoners before General Washington, who asked him how he had taken them? "By——, general," said he, "I surrounded them."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

A NATURAL CURIOSITY

PATRICK, recently arrived and unused to the ways of this country, was accosted one day by a member of the sporting fraternity, who offered to impart to him, for a modest consideration, a marvellous way to make money without toiling for it. All one needed, he said, was a small amount to bet on a certain horse that couldn't possibly lose.

"And yez say Oi can get that money without working for it?" asked the bewildered Irishman, when the other was through explaining.

"Sure thing. All the work you got to do is to count the mazuma."

"I'll thry it," said Pat.

So they hied them to a race-course, where the sporty-looking gentleman placed Pat's money at odds of five to one. And the horse won! Pat's joy was unbounded when he was handed a large roll of yellow-backed bills. Calling his new-found friend to one side he asked in a voice that trembled with excitement:

"Oi say, how long has this thing been goin' on?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

FRIENDLY RELATIONS

A LITTLE girl was lost on the street, and was brought into the police station. The officers tried in every way to learn her name. Finally one of the officers said:

"Tell me, little girl, what name does your mother call your father?"

"Why," responded the child, innocently, "she doesn't call him any names; she likes him."

NO SACRIFICE

AN OLD Scotchman was threatened with blindness if he did not give up drinking.

✓ "Now, McTavish," said the doctor, "it's like this: you've either to stop the whiskey or lose your eyesight — and you must choose."

"Ay, weel, Doctor," said McTavish, "I'm an auld man noo, an' I was thinkin' I ha'e seen about everything worth seein'."

HIS PREFERENCE

WHEN J. M. Barrie, the author of "Peter Pan," addressed an audience of one thousand girls at Smith College during his American

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

visit of last year, a friend asked him how he had found the experience.

"Well," replied Mr. Barrie, "to tell you the truth, I'd much rather talk one thousand times to one girl than to talk one time to a thousand girls."

UNIMAGINATIVE

A TEACHER observed what he thought a lack of patriotic enthusiasm in one of the boys under his instruction.

"Now, Tommy," said he, "tell us what you would think if you saw the Stars and Stripes waving over the field of battle."

"I should think," was the logical reply of Thomas, "that the wind was blowing."

ALL IN A NUTSHELL

DO YOU understand this building-loan scheme?"

"Sure! They build you a house and you pay so much a month. By the time you are thoroughly dissatisfied with the place it's yours."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

INDUCEMENT

AN ALERT little five-year-old was taking a walk in a city park with her mother for the first time, and when they arrived at the boat landing where the swan boats were waiting for passengers little Elsie pulled away and declared very vigorously that she did not want to go, and as her mother urged her she broke into tears.

This sudden fear was so unusual that her mother could not understand it until she heard the boatman's call:

"Come along, come along — ride clear around the pond — only five cents for ladies and gents — children thrown in!"

SHOWED ITS AGE

FORMER Secretary of the Navy, Meyer, had some funny experiences when he was in the diplomatic service. While he was at Rome an American tourist called on him.

"Have you been to Pompeii?" asked Mr. Meyer of his visitor.

"Oh, yes," was the reply, "and it was very strange and interesting. I think something must have happened there; the blessed place was mostly ruins!"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

A NUMBER of men were having a discussion as to who was the greatest inventor. Some said Edison, some Watt, some Morse, some one and some another. Finally a pawnbroker got in a word and said:

"Vell, chentlemens, dose vas gread peoples, but I tells you dot man vot invented interest vas no slouch."

SOMETHING WRONG

A SCOTCH minister and his servant, going home from a wedding, began to consider the state into which their potations at the wedding feast had left them. The minister with the well known caution of his race began to think of home.

"Sandy," he said, "just stop a minute here till I go ahead. Maybe I don't walk very steady and the good wife might remark something not just right."

He walked ahead of the servant for a short distance and then asked:

"How is it? Am I walking straight?"

"Oh, aye," answered Sandy, thickly, "ye're a'recht; but who's that who's with you?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

TOO PERSONAL

IN BOSTON, a young lawyer, who spent most of his time trying to seem busy and prosperous, went out for a while, leaving on his door a card neatly marked:

"Will be back in an hour."

On his return he found that some envious rival had inscribed underneath, "What for?"

TOM SAWYER TO DATE

A LITTLE boy bustled into a grocery one day with a memorandum in his hand.

"Hello, Mr. Smith," he said. "I want thirteen pounds of coffee at 32 cents."

"Very good," said the grocer, and he noted down the sale, and put his clerk to packing the coffee. "Anything else, Charlie?"

"Yes. Twenty-seven pounds of sugar at 9 cents."

"The loaf, eh? And what else?"

"Seven and a half pounds of bacon at 20 cents."

"That will be a good brand. Go on."

"Five pounds of tea at 90 cents; eleven and a half quarts of molasses at 8 cents a pint; two

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

eight-pound hams at $21\frac{1}{2}$ cents, and five dozen jars of pickled walnuts at 24 cents a jar."

The grocer made out the bill.

"It's a big order," he said. "Did your mother tell you to pay for it?"

"My mother," said the boy, as he pocketed the neat and accurate bill, "has nothing to do with this business. It is my arithmetic lesson and I had to get it done somehow."

DEVOTIONAL

AS THE new minister of the village was on his way to evening service he met a rising young man of the place whom he was anxious to have become an active member of the church.

"Good evening, my young friend," he said solemnly. "Do you ever attend a place of worship?"

"Yes, indeed, sir; regularly every Sunday night," replied the young fellow, with a smile. "I'm on my way to see her now."

CASTE

MRS. GOLDVEIN of Cripple Creek, having come into a fortune through a lucky strike, set up a country home near Denver, where she lived in style. One day, while she was showing

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

some of her old-time friends about the place, they came to the poultry yard.

"What beautiful chickens!" the visitors exclaimed.

"All prize fowl," haughtily explained the hostess.

"Do they lay every day?" was the next question.

"Oh, they could, of course, but in our position it is not necessary for them to do so."

IN HIS HANDS

✓ **W**HEN Dr. Creighton was bishop of London," said the present bishop of London, "he rode on a train one day with a small, meek curate. Dr. Creighton, an ardent lover of tobacco, soon took out his cigar case, and with a smile, said:

"'You don't mind my smoking, I suppose?'

"The meek curate bowed and answered humbly, 'Not if your lordship doesn't mind my being sick.'"

NOT HIS FAULT

✓ **T**WO London cabbies were glaring at each other.

"Aw, wot's the matter with you?" demanded one.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Nothink's the matter with me. Why?"

"You gave me a narsty look," persisted the first.

"Me? Why, you certainly 'ave a narsty look, but I didn't give it to you."

EXPERIENCED

THE girls who are going out in thousands from British factories and workshops to Australia seem to start generally in domestic service out there.

"I heard of one," says a Melbourne scribe, "who could not cook. But, after days of learning, she produced an edible dish tastefully surrounded by scalloped paper. Her mistress took occasion to compliment her upon her neat ornamentation.

"'Yes, mum, that's one thing I can do real well,' was the reply. 'You see, my trade in London was to make paper linings for coffins!'"

DEFINITION

A NEGRO preacher chanced to make use in the course of his sermon of the word "phenomenon." At the close of the meeting one of his congregation asked the meaning of

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

the word. The preacher put him off until the following Sunday, when he thus explained:

"If you see a cow, that's not a 'phenomenon.' If you see a thistle, that's not a 'phenomenon.' And if you see a bird that sings, that's not a 'phenomenon' either. But if you see a cow sitting on a thistle and singing like a bird, then that's a 'phenomenon.'"

RUBINSTEIN'S ADVICE

A YOUNG lady called one day on Rubinstein, the great pianist, who had consented to listen to her playing.

"What do you think I should do now?" she asked when she had finished.

"Get married," was Rubinstein's answer.

IN DOUBT

A CHICAGO vegetarian engaged a German cook lady not long ago. His wife liked the appearance of the applicant; her references were good, and the wages she demanded not exorbitant.

"I'd like to have you come," said the lady of the house, "but perhaps you won't like to live with us. We are vegetarians and never have

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

any meat in the house. Would you be satisfied with a vegetable diet?"

The fraulein scratched her head. "Vell," she said dubiously, "iss beer a wegetable?"

PARTICULAR ABOUT HIS LOOKS

LAWRENCE WHEAT (Larry for short), who has been more or less a Broadway star for several seasons, made his first big hit in the part of "Stub" Talmage in "The College Widow." Larry had not long been out of college when the Ade comedy was finishing its long run at the Garden Theatre. Two companies were to be placed on the road, and Wheat, who had seen the play several times, felt that he was born to play the part of "Stub." Accordingly he waited upon Henry W. Savage, the producer.

Savage studied the applicant keenly.

"So you want to play the part of Stub?" said the colonel. "What makes you think you can play the part?"

"I'm just that sort of a type," said Wheat, swelling up his chest and trying to look real brave.

"Well," said the colonel, "we need an actor

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

as well as a type for that part. Are you an actor?"

"I am," said Wheat.

"You don't look like an actor," said the colonel.

"I don't want to look like an actor," said Larry. "It's tough enough to have to be one."

HIS REASON

COULD anything better illustrate the point of self-sacrifice than the following anecdote?

One scorching day, when his comrades were nearly prostrated, he was seen carrying his own gun and another man's, two cartridge belts, two knapsacks, and a dog. The colonel stopped him.

"Look here, you marched all yesterday and you fought all last night," the colonel said.

"Yes, sir," said the young soldier, respectfully.

"Well, then, what are you carrying that dog for?"

"Because, colonel," said the soldier, "the dog's tired."

HER PROPERTY

IT IS said of a certain lady that she had some caracul coats sent up on approval on Saturday, and returned them on Monday morning with the message, "None was suitable."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

The next day she received a courteous communication from the head of the fur department returning her prayer-book, which had been found in the pocket of one of the coats.

THE PRICE

DR. GEORGE DRAPER, of the Rockefeller Institute, discussing woman's work in the world, said:

"And this, mind you, leaves childbearing out of count. Two women sat one day on a wind-swept ocean pier. The first woman had three beautiful children, the other was childless. The childless woman, gazing wistfully out over the tumbling blue water, said:

"'I'd give ten years of my life to have three such children as yours.'

"'Well, three children cost about that,' the other woman answered gravely."

ONE ON HIM

A BALTIMORE physician boarded a crowded car. A woman was standing and a big German was sprawling over twice the seat area that was necessary to him. Indignantly the physician said to him:

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"See here! Why don't you move a little so that this tired woman may have a seat?"

"Say, dot's a joke on you, all right! Dot's my vife!"

INFINITESIMAL

AN ADMIRING constituent gave Congressman Legare of South Carolina one of those vest-pocket edition lilliputian Mexican dogs to take home to the children. Legare — pronounced Leg-ree, by the way — was leading the dog along by a cotton string when a South Carolina mountaineer stopped him.

"Are it a reg'lar dog?" the man asked.

"Yes, it's a Ch ——. Well, I can't pronounce the name of it," said Legare, "but it's some kind of a Mexican dog."

"Just a pup, I reckon?"

"No, it's full grown."

"Well," opined the mountaineer, "that's the least dog I ever seen at one time."

FELT HE COULD AFFORD TO WAIT

AN OLD gentleman, clad in a somewhat youthful suit of light gray flannel, sat on a bench in the park enjoying the spring day.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"What's the matter, sonny?" he asked a small urchin who lay on the grass and stared at him intently. "Why don't you go and play?"

"Don't want to," the boy replied.

"But it is not natural," the old gentleman insisted, "for a boy to be so quiet. Why don't you want to?"

"Oh, I'm just waitin'," the little fellow answered. "I'm just waitin' till you get up. A man painted that bench about fifteen minutes ago."

EVIDENCE TO THE CONTRARY

IN MOONSHINE districts, where the whiskey looks like water and is drunk like water, strange ideas prevail as to what intoxication really is. In a village one Sunday afternoon a man lay in the boiling sun in the middle of the road with an empty bottle by his side.

"He's drunk; lock him up," the sheriff said. But a woman interposed hastily.

"No, he ain't drunk," she said. "I jest seen his fingers move."

EASING HIS MIND

THE young man met the little ten-year-old sister of the house and said:

"Now, Jennie, I want to tell you something

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

that I hope you will like. Do you know that at the party last evening your sister promised to marry me? Now I hope you will not think hard of me?"

"Hard of you?" echoed the truthful little Jennie. "Why should I? That's what mamma gave the party for."

WANTED THE WORLD TO KNOW

A NEGRO porter in one of the popular Kansas City clubs, recently divorced, approached a reporter in the club rooms a few days ago and remarked:

"Say, boss, don't you-all know I done got a divorce, and I ain't seen a single line about it in the paper yet, an' it been mos' two weeks?"

"Well, Rastus, that's strange," the reporter replied, trying to look serious.

"Can't you-all put it in the paper now?" he asked. "'Taint as how I cum to get the divorce that I cares to let people know about, but don't you know, boss, that I meets a lot of cullud ladies every day that jes' won't speak to me 'cause they think I'm married."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

HIS LESSON

HIS teacher was having a hard time explaining the geography lesson.

"Tommy, you can learn this if you make up your mind. It's not one bit smart to appear dull. I know that you are just as bright as any boy in the class. Remember, Tommy, where there's a will there's —"

"Aw," broke in Tommy, "I know all dat, I do! Me fadder's a lawyer, an' I've heard him say it lots o' times."

"You should not have interrupted me, but I am glad that your father has taught you the old adage. Can you repeat it to me?"

"Sure. Me fadder says dat where der's a will der's always a bunch o' poor relations."

TOO TRUE!

A GIRL was asked to explain why men never kiss each other, while women do. She replied:

"Men have something better to kiss; women haven't."

NO EXCEPTION

WHEN preparing his parishioners for the solemn ordinance of confirmation an old clergyman found among them one old woman so

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

excessively ignorant and stupid that for some weeks prior to the time, he was obliged to have her come to his house every day in order to instruct and catechise her. At length he began to hope that his time, patience, and zeal had not been entirely bestowed in vain, a few bright flashes of understanding having burst from the old dame's clouded intellect.

"Now, my good friend," said the worthy pastor, just previous to the commencement of the ceremony, "as this is the last moment in which I shall have an opportunity of conversing with you, let me ask, do you thoroughly understand and believe all the articles of your Christian faith?"

"Ay, yes, sir, thank'ee," replied his venerable pupil, with a simper, and dropping one of her best courtesies, "I does indeed, now; and, thank God, I heartily renounces them all."

DELIBERATE

THE Rev. James Hamilton, minister of Liverpool, while on holiday in Scotland, had a narrow escape from drowning. Accompanied by a boy, Mr. Hamilton was fishing for sea-trout, when he slipped on a stone, lost balance, and being encumbered with heavy wading

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

boots, had great difficulty in keeping his head above water. Finally he managed to get back to the shore, although in a very exhausted state, and said to the boy:

"I noticed that you never tried to help me."

"Na," was the deliberate response, "but I was thinkin' o't."

INTRODUCING AN OLD FRIEND

GENERAL GROSVENOR, the Republican war-horse of Ohio, was billed to speak in Pittsburg.

When it was time to introduce the general the chairman arose and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I need hardly say to you that we are particularly fortunate to-night in having with us one of the greatest Republicans of our sister state, Ohio. We are to have the pleasure of listening to a man whose name is a household word in Pittsburg, who has fought for us the battle of protection, upon which so much of Pittsburg's material prosperity depends. You all know him. Everybody in Pittsburg respects and honours him. He is our friend. His name is on all our lips. Friends, I now have the pleasure of introducing to you that sterling patriot, that rock-ribbed Republican, that emi-

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

ment statesman, General — General — Gen ——”
The chairman flushed, stammered, wiped his forehead nervously, and then blurted, “By the way, what is your name?”

WHERE IGNORANCE IS BLISS

ARTEMUS WARD was once travelling in the cars, dreading to be bored, and feeling miserable, when a man approached him, sat down and said:

“Did you hear that last thing on Horace Greeley?”

“Greeley? Greeley?” said Artemus. “Horace Greeley? Who is he?”

The man was quiet about five minutes. Pretty soon he said:

“George Francis Train is kicking up a good deal of a row over in England. Do you think they will put him in a bastille?”

“Train? Train? George Francis Train?” said Artemus solemnly. “I never heard of him.”

This ignorance kept the man quiet for about fifteen minutes. Then he said:

“What do you think about General Grant’s chances for the presidency? Do you think they will run him?”

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Grant? Grant? Hang it, man," said Artemus, "you appear to know more strangers than any man I ever saw!"

The man was furious. He walked off, but at last came back and said:

"Say, did you ever hear of Adam?"

Artemus looked up and said:

"Adam? Adam? What was his other name?"

HEARTY

A NEGRO preacher addressed his flock with great earnestness on the subject of "Miracles," as follows:

"My beloved friends, de greatest ob all miracles was 'bout the loaves and fishes. Dey was 5,000 loaves and 2,000 fishes, and de twelve apostles had to eat 'em all. De miracle is, dey didn't bust."

RESEMBLANCE

TWO sisters while visiting in Ireland got into conversation one day with a tenant of their hostess. One of the girls, who is quite stout, asked the old Irish woman if she would have known them for sisters.

"Well," was the answer, "ye look alike, but

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

yer sister's slender, while you, miss — well, you favour the quane."

TACT

SHE was standing on a chair on the pier watching the racing. On a chair behind were two Frenchmen. The lady turned around and said:

"I hope I don't obstruct your view?"

"Mademoiselle," quickly replied one, "I much prefer the obstruction to the view."

A CONUNDRUM

WHAT is the difference between a diplomat and a lady?

The following has been suggested as a proper solution of this interesting conundrum.

When a diplomat says yes, he means perhaps; when he says perhaps, he means no; when he says no, he is no diplomat.

When a lady says no, she means perhaps; when she says perhaps, she means yes; when she says yes, she is no lady.

HABIT

AT A funeral in Nebraska," says William J. Bryan, "the preacher who had been asked to deliver the funeral oration was a stranger in

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

town and didn't know the departed sister very well. After he had said all that he could, he suggested that any one who could add a few words about the dear departed would be heard gladly.

"Three or four arose in turn and paid tribute to the memory of the woman who had passed beyond. Then there was a pause. Finally one old brother arose and said:

"'Well, if we're all through speaking about the departed sister I will now make a few brief remarks on the tariff.'"

THEIR LAST HOURS

A CLERGYMAN, who was not averse to an occasional glass, hired an Irishman to clean out his cellar. The Irishman began his work. He brought forth a lot of empty whiskey bottles, and as he lifted each one he looked through it at the sun. The preacher, who was walking on the lawn, saw him, and said:

"They are all dead ones, Pat."

"They are!" said Pat. "Well, there is one good thing about it, they all had the minister with them when they were dying."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

AN HONOURED GUEST

WHEN Lord Elphiston was in America a couple of years ago he was entertained at dinner by a family, the head of which was to accompany his lordship on his hunting trip through the wilds of the Northwest. A child of about five years, named Ethel, during the dinner was big-eyed and big-eared with wonderment — in fact, completely overawed by the presence of the distinguished foreigner. Ethel heard her mother and father now and then say:

“My Lord this, and my Lord that,” or, “Will you have some of this, my Lord, or some of that?” the dinner being a purely informal one.

Finally, when the mother was interested in the conversation of another guest Ethel noticed that milord was gazing interestedly at a dish of relish quite out of his reach. The child thought she saw a chance to please Lord Elphiston, and in a firm, clear voice, exclaimed:

“Mama, God wants some pickles.”

NOURISHED

AN OLD South Carolina ducky was sent to the hospital of St. Xavier in Charleston. One of the gentle, black-robed sisters put a

thermometer in his mouth to take his temperature. Presently, when the doctor made his rounds, he said:

"Well, Nathan, how do you feel?"

"I feel right tol'ble, boss."

"Have you had any nourishment?"

"Yassir!"

"What did you have?"

"A lady done gimme a piece of glass to suck, boss."

IN TRAINING

THESE college girls," said a clergyman, as he gazed at the white and superb ranks of the beautiful graduates, "are a boon to the race. They introduce new ideas. I christened the other day the first baby of a married college girl. Now, babies usually cry while they are being christened; but this one was as quiet as a lamb. Throughout the ceremony it smiled up beautifully into my face.

"'Well, madam,' said I to the young wife at the christening's end, 'I must congratulate you on your little one's behaviour. I have christened more than 2,000 babies, but I never before christened one that behaved so well as yours.' The young mother smiled demurely.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"'No wonder he behaved well,' she said. 'His father and I, with a pail of water, have been practising christening on him for the last ten days!'"

AN OBJECTION

ARCHBISHOP PATRICK J. RYAN of Philadelphia once received a call from Wayne McVeagh, in company with Mr. Roberts, president of the Pennsylvania system at the time that McVeagh was counsel for that railroad.

"Your grace," said Mr. McVeagh, "Mr. Roberts, who always travels with his counsel, will, undoubtedly, get you passes over all the railroads in the United States, if in return you will get him a pass to Paradise."

"I would do so gladly," flashed the archbishop, "if it were not for separating him from his counsel."

A LOST DOG

HIS name vas Bismarck, mit only von eye, on account of a old black cat vot belongs to an Irish gals mid red-headed hair. Also he has only dree legs, on account of a mocolotif — engines mitout any bull-ketcher. He vas a dog, Bismarck vas. He vas balt-headed all

ofer himself consequence of ret-hot vater, on account of fighting mid an old maids cat. On vone end of himself vas skituated his head — und his tail it vas py de oder endt. He only carries about von half of his tail mit him, on account of a circular saw mill. He looks a good deal more older as he is already, but he aint qvite so oldt as dot until de next Christmas.

De vay vot you can know him is, if you calls him "Shack" he vont say notings, but makes answers to de name "Bismarck" by saying "Pow-vow-vow!" und, in de meantime, vagging half of his tail — dot oder half vas cut off, so he can't, of course, shake it. Also, if you t'row some stones on top of him, he vill run like mat, und holler "Ky-yi ky-yi!" Dot's de vay you can told my dog. He looks like a cross pteven a bull-foundt-landt und a cat-mit-nine-tails but he ain't. He got not efen von whole tail, und he ain't cross not von pit. I haf been everywheres looking for dot tog. Ven I am in Canada de last week, a pig loafermans comes up to me and says:

"Do you know I know You?"

"No you don't. Do I know you? If I know you, tell me vonce who I vas."

"You vas Mr. Ross," says he, "und you vas looking for your leetle Sharley."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"No sir: I vas VonBoyle" says I, "und I vas looking for my leetle Bismarck."

I vill pay eferyvone vot vill brought me dot tog or send him pack, fifteen cents C. O. D. py Adams' Express office, mit a money order und de prifilege of examination before taking, to see if it vas maype counterfeit. Anoder vay vot you could told if it vas Bismarck is dot he vas almost a dwin. He would be half of a bair of dwins dot time, only dere vas dree of dem — a bair of dwins und a half. Also he got scars on de top of his side, bit dot Thomas cat never recovered himself. You can also tell Bismarck on accountd of his wonderful inshtinct. He can out inshtinct any tog vot you nefer say in my life. For inshtinct if you pat him on top of his head mit your hand, he knows right away dot you like him, but if you pat him on de head mit a pavement stones or de shtick of a proom, den he vill suspect right off dot you care not very much about him.

IT WAS ALL RIGHT

DR. GEORGE E. HALE of the Carnegie Observatory on Mount Wilson, described in Pasadena a quarrel between two eastern astronomers.

"It was a bitter and lifelong quarrel," he said. "It was founded on my own specialty, the sun spot. Many harsh things were said in this quarrel, and at the height the older of the two astronomers died. A day or two afterward, a friend said to the survivor:

"So your old enemy is dead, eh? Do you intend to go to the funeral?"

"No, I don't," was the reply. 'But I approve of it.'"

D I R E

THE antipathy which Dr. Johnson bore to Scotland was not singular or unprecedented. Lord Stanley came plainly dressed to request a private audience of King James I. A gaily dressed Scotchman refused him admittance into the king's closet. The king hearing an altercation between the two, came out, and inquired the cause. "My liege," said Lord Stanley "this gay countryman of yours has refused me admittance to your presence."

"Cousin," said the king, "how shall I punish him? Shall I send him to the Tower?"

"Oh, no, my liege," replied Lord Stanley, "inflict a severer punishment; send him back to Scotland."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

TOM OCHILTREE having been hurt in a railway accident, brought suit for damages. Walking with the aid of crutches some months afterward he met a friend, who inquired:

"Can't you get along without crutches, Tom?"

"My doctor says I can," said Ochiltree, "but my lawyer says I can't."

AN EXCHANGE OF BOYS

TWO boys in the Sunday school who stood at the head of the class were invariably asked the same questions, which were, "Who made you?" and "To what do you return?" to which the first boy always replied, "God made me," and the second boy answered, "Dust of the earth."

On this occasion the first boy was absent, so the first question, "Who made you?" was addressed to the second boy.

"Dust of the earth," he replied.

"Quite wrong, Tommy. God made you," said the teacher indignantly.

"No, teacher. The boy that God made has gone home with the stomach ache."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

UNCOMMON HUMANITY

AT AN evening party, a very elderly lady was dancing with a young partner. A stranger approached Douglas Jerrold, who was looking on, and said:

"Pray, sir, can you tell me who is the young gentleman dancing with that elderly lady?"

"One of the Humane Society, I should think," replied Jerrold.

ON GENERAL PRINCIPLES

A LADY persisted in pouring the praises of an absent friend into the unsympathizing ear of Charles Lamb, assuring him over and over that the gentleman in question was "such a charming man," etc., and ending with:

"I know him, bless him!" To which Lamb replied,

"Well, I don't, but d — n him at a venture."

WHEN MARTIN COMES

THERE was a certain minister — an awfully good man — his name was Williams; and he was journeying one dark and stormy night through a sparsely inhabited part of North

Carolina, down in the hill district. He carried an umbrella, and inside of his coat he had the Good Book — something, indeed, that he was never without. He walked along the road until he came to a farmhouse, and knocked at the door, and a man came out.

“Can you put me up for the night?”

The old farmer shook his head:

“Sorry, my friend: there is a big party here to-night. I ain’t got a spare inch in the house.”

“Well, put me up anywhere; it doesn’t make any difference where.”

“Can’t do it. It ain’t in nature to put you where there ain’t no room.”

The old man’s voice lowered. He pointed off down through the rain:

“Along down there, there is a perfectly good house. Perfectly good roof on it. Nice fireplace. Fire wood. Good bed to sleep in. Door on the latch. Just walk down there.”

“What’s the matter with the house?” said Williams.

The old man looked around and whispered again:

“Well, there ain’t nothing the matter with it. As I said, it’s a perfectly good house but they do say it’s *banted*.”

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

Brother Williams pressed the Good Book in his inside pocket and smilingly said:

"I don't mind that."

Thanking his friend, he went off through the rain with his umbrella up.

He reached the house. The door was half-way open. He entered and placed his umbrella against the door so that the gusts of wind would not blow it in. Then he struck a match and lighted a candle that he found on the table. There was a perfectly good fireplace with a nice pile of fire wood by it, and an easy-chair by the table. Just back of him the stairs led up on the other floor.

He lighted the fire and soon there was a roaring blaze up the chimney. He took out the Good Book and began to turn the leaves back like this (turn — turn — turn).

"To him that hath shall be given and from —"

He heard a sound. He turned his head and looked up the stairs to the door at its head. The door opened and a cat — a little bit of a cat — came through the door and crept slowly down the steps — walked across the floor — went over to the fireplace, and, washing its face in the red-hot coals, sat down.

Mr. Williams looked at the cat for a moment,

then settled back and began to read the Good Book again.

By and by, after he had been reading some time, he stopped, lifted up his head. There was another sound. He turned around slowly and looked — *looked*.

The door at the head of the stairs opened once more and another cat — larger than the first cat — well about so high — about as big as a small dog — came down the steps slowly — walked across the floor — went over to the fireplace, and, washing its face in the red-hot coals, sat down.

Brother Williams went on reading.

He looked occasionally at the small cat and then at the other cat.

“To him that hath shall be given, and from him ——”

Another sound.

Brother Williams looked up.

This time he heard a louder noise than before. He looked around and saw the door open, and a great big cat — my! as big as a large Newfoundland dog — walked slowly down the stairs — across the floor — over to the fireplace, and, washing his face in the red-hot coals, sat down.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

Brother Williams began to turn the leaves of the Good Book, and then —

The little bit of a cat turned to the great big cat and said:

“When do we start?”

The big cat thought a minute and replied:

“When Martin comes.”

Then Brother Williams got up.

He went over to the door and he carefully took away the umbrella from the door so that the door swung open. Then with his umbrella in his hand, he went back to the big cat and said:

“You tell Martin that I was here; but I went away.”

SPECIFICATIONS

IN A country church the curate had to give out two notices, the first of which was about baptisms, and the latter had to do with a new hymn-book. Owing to an accident he inverted the order, and gave out as follows

“I am requested to give notice that the new hymn-book will be used for the first time in this church on Sunday next, and I am also requested to call attention to the delay which often takes place in bringing children to be baptized; they should be brought on the earliest day possible.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

This is particularly pressed on mothers who have young babies."

"And for the information of those who have none," added the rector, in gentle, kindly tones, and who, being deaf, had not heard what had been previously said, "for the information of those who have none I may state that, if wished, they can be obtained on application in the vestry immediately after service to-day. Limp ones one shilling each; with stiff backs, two shillings."

ESSAY ON COLUMBUS

By a Small Boy.

COLUMBUS was a man who could make an egg stand on end without breaking it. The King of Spain said to Columbus, 'Can you discover America?' 'Yes,' said Columbus, 'if you will give me a ship.' So he had a ship, and sailed over the sea in the direction where he thought America ought to be found. The sailors quarreled and said they believed there was no such place. But after many days the pilot came to him and said, 'Columbus, I see land.' 'Then that is America.' When the ship got near, the land was full of black men. Co-

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

lumbus said, 'Is this America?' 'Yes it is,' said they. Then he said. 'I suppose you are the Niggers?' 'Yes,' they said; 'we are.' The chief said, 'I suppose you are Columbus.' 'You are right,' said he. Then the chief turned to his men and said, 'There is no help for it; we are discovered at last.'"

STUDIES OF THE VERNACULAR

CONVERSATION between the ribbon-counter girl and the girl at the candy counter:

"Onnust?"

"'Sright!"

"Oakum off!"

"Sure zima stanninear."

"Juh mean it?"

"Ubetcha."

"Ooseddy did?"

"Gurlova there."

"Wah sheno bout it?"

"D'no. Swatshesedd."

"Oakum off! Yercoddin."

"Thinkso fu wanta. Bawcher Chrismus gifs?"

"Notchett. Bawchoors?"

"Naw. Saylookeer!"

"Watchasay?"

"Jeer baw Tomman Lil ——"

"Notsloud! Somebody learus."

"Lettum. Nothinmuchno how."

"Quitchercoddin."

"Oakum off! I ainacoddin."

"Gracious Imus begittinalong!"

"Somus I."

"Slong!"

"Slong!"

A LETTER

A MEMBER of Parliament in Australia recently received from an indignant constituent, who had asked him in vain for a "billet" (a job in politics), the following unique letter:

"Dear Sur: You're a dam fraud, and you know it. I don't care a rap for the billet or for the muneey either, but I object to bein' made an infernil fool of. Soon as you was elected by my hard-working friends, a feller wanted to bet me that you wouldn't be in the house moren a week before you made a ass of yourself. I bet him a cow on that, as I thought you was worth it then.

"After I got your note sayin' you deklined to ackt in the matter I druv the Cow over to the Feller's place an' tole him he had won her. That's orl I got by howlin' meself horse for you.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

You not only hurt a man's Pride, but you injure him in bizness. I believe you take a pleshir in cuttin' your best friends, but wate till the clouds roll by an' they'll cut you — just behind the Ear, where the butcher cuts the pig. Yure no man. Yure only a tule. Go to hel. I lowers meself ritin' to a skunk, even tho I med him a member of Parliament."

BELIEF

SIDNEY SMITH was once dining in company with a French gentleman, who had been before dinner indulging in a number of free-thinking speculations, and had ended by avowing himself a materialist.

"Very good soup this," said Mr. Smith.

"Oui, monsieur, c'est excellent," was the reply.

"Pray, sir, do you believe in a cook?" inquired Mr. Smith.

ABOUT A PAIR OF PANTS

A DETROIT man, who had contributed a bundle of his cast-off clothing for the relief of the victims of the Minnesota fire, received from one of the sufferers the following note:

"The committy man giv me amungst other

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

things wat he called a pare of pants, and 'twould make me pant some to ware em. I found your name and where you live on one of the pokits. My wife laffed so when I shode em to her that I thot she wood have a conipshun fit. She wants to no if there lives and breathes a man who has legs no bigger than that. She sed if there was he orter be taken up for vagrinsy for having no visible means of support. I couldnt get em on my oldest boy, so I used em for gun cases. If you hav another pare to spare, my wife would like to get em to hang up by the side of the fireplace to keep the tongs in."

WITNESSES

WHEN a Boston attorney, named Mason, was preparing the case of E. K. Avery, and had examined about two hundred witnesses, somebody called to see him. The legal gentleman sent word that he was occupied and could not be interrupted.

"But the man is a witness — a Methodist minister."

"Call him up," said Mason. "Well, sir, what can you testify?"

"I had a vision — two angels have appeared

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

to me, and told me that Brother Avery is innocent — ”

“Let them be summoned,” said Mason, as he resumed his work. —

H O N O U R E D

DURING the past season a traveller in the South stopped in a small town to make a purchase. The storekeeper could not make the correct change for the bill which was presented, so Mr. Boak started in search of some one who could. Sitting beside the door, whittling a stick, was an old darky.

“Uncle,” said Mr. Boak, “can you change a ten-dollar bill?” The old fellow looked up in surprise; then he touched his cap, and replied:

“’Deed an’ Ah can’t, boss, but Ah ’preciates de honour, jest de same.”

A S C A N D A L

LITTLE Mary was evidently attached to a neighbour’s cat and went every day to play with her. One day she returned home, her eyes big with excitement.

“Why, mother,” she exclaimed, “pussy has kittens, and I didn’t even know she was married.”

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

CROWDED

A LAWYER died in a provincial town, and his fellow-lawyers wrote over his grave:

"Here lies a lawyer and an honest man."

Not long after, the governor of the province visited the town, and among other places inspected the cemetery. When he came to the lawyer's grave he stopped, read the inscription once or twice, and turning to the head inspector said:

"Look here, my friend. We wink at a good many things in this province, but I do object to your burying two men in one grave."



NO HOPE

BUT," protested the space writer, "perhaps you could use this article if I were to boil it down?"

"Nothing doing," rejoined the man behind the blue pencil. "If you were to take a gallon of water and boil it down to a pint, it would still be water."



GLAD NEWS

THE worthy shepherd of the Mission Methodist church in a burst of passionate eloquence in denunciation of the world's wickedness declared:

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Hell is full of cocktails, high balls, and peeka-boo waists."

Voice from the gallery:

"Oh, Death, where is thy sting!"

QUITE DISTINCT

MR. BROWN had just had a telephone put in connecting his office and house, and was very much pleased with it.

"I tell you, business is a wonderful thing. I want you to dine with me this evening, and I will notify Mrs. Brown to expect you." Speaking through the telephone — "My friend Smith will dine with us this evening." Then to his friend, "Now listen and hear how plain her reply comes back." Mrs. Brown's reply came back with startling distinctness.

"Ask your friend Smith if he thinks we keep a hotel."

SKEPTICAL

MR. I. W. HELLMAN, president of the Wells-Fargo Nevada National Bank, tells the following story:

"I recently entertained a prominent banker from Tucson, Arizona. I invited him to the Mer-

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD
chants' Association dinner. My friend listened to the many speeches very attentively, and said, afterward:

"Mr. Hellman, I noticed that almost every speaker said, 'This city, like Phoenix, will rise from her ashes.' Now there is some mistake about that. I have lived in Arizona all my life, and I know for a fact that Phoenix never had a conflagration."

ALMOST A NECESSITY

JOAQUIN MILLER was once conversing with a learned professor who was visiting California. To the poet's query: "What do you do?" the professor answered that he held the chair of metaphysics and logic at a New England university. Whereupon the venerable Miller, with an encouraging smile, reassuringly patted the professor on the shoulder.

"Logic and metaphysics, eh? Well, I suppose we must have people to look after these things, even if they don't exist."

A DOUBTFUL CADDY

WALTER J. TRAVIS, the golfer, set up his ball, and then made a half dozen swishes at the short grass with the driver.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"I am not in good form," he said. "I am playing like a broker we had here last week. This broker played once around, making a dreadful exhibition of himself. Of this, though, he was not aware. He was doing pretty well for him. The man's caddy was an unusually quiet, stolid lad, a boy with a freckled face, quite devoid of expression. And since the caddy never once laughed or sneered at his bad play, the broker took a fancy to him. And he said at the end of the round, in the hope of getting a compliment:

"I have been travelling for the last six months, I am quite out of practice. That is why I am in such bad form to-day."

"The caddy replied calmly: 'Then ye've played before, have ye, sir?'"

ON THE CODFISH

A CORRESPONDENT of the New York *Post* says that the codfish frequents "the table-lands of the sea." The codfish no doubt does this to secure as nearly as possible a dry, bracing atmosphere. This pure air of the submarine table-lands gives to the codfish that breadth of chest and depth of lungs that we have often noticed.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

The glad free smile of the codfish is largely attributed to the exhilaration of this oceanic altitoodleum.

The correspondent further says that "the cod subsists largely on the sea cherry." Those who have not had the pleasure of seeing the codfish climb the cherry tree in search of food, or clubbing the fruit from the heavily laden branches with chunks of coral, have missed a very fine sight.

The codfish, when at home rambling through the submarine forests, does not wear his vest unbuttoned, as he does while loafing around the grocery stores of the United States. — *Bill Nye.*

AN THEM

A SAILOR who had been to a church service, where he heard some fine music, was afterward descanting upon an anthem which had given him great pleasure.

A listening shipmate finally asked: "I say, Bill, what's a hanthem?"

"What?" exclaimed Bill. "Do you mean to say you don't know what a hanthem is?"

"Not me."

"Well, then, I'll tell yer. If I was to tell

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

yer, "Ere, Bill, give me that 'andspike,' that wouldn't be a hanthem. But if I was to say 'Bill, Bill, Bill, give, give, give me that, Bill, give me, give me that 'and, give me that 'and, 'andspike, spike, spike, Bill, give me that, that 'and, 'andspike, 'and, 'andspike, 'and, 'andspike, spike, spike, spike, spike. Ahmen, ahmen. Billgivemethatanspike, spike, ahmen;' why, that would be a hanthem."

A LEADING QUESTION

IN A debate at a Kansas high school the woman suffrage amendment was under discussion.

"It would be unwise to give woman the ballot," declared a budding Daniel Webster, in attacking the proposition. "Woman could not be relied upon to exercise good judgment in voting. She changes her mind far too often." The next speaker was a young woman. She arose and cast a pitying glance at her opponent.

"I would like to ask my honourable opponent," she cooed sweetly, "if he ever tried to change a woman's mind, once it was made up?" The young woman got the decision.

MISNAMED

DR. ALEXIS CARREL, seated in the smoke-room of the Victoria Louise, was enthusiastically hailed by a brother physician.

"What a genius you are!" Thus the brother physician ended a long eulogy.

But Dr. Carrel smiled and said:

"A genius, eh? Well, at his villa in Biarritz, Sarasate was once called a genius by a famous critic. But Sarasate frowned and shook his head.

"A genius!" he said. 'For thirty-seven years I've practised fourteen hours a day, and now they call me a genius!'"

A GREAT SYSTEM

MARK TWAIN was censuring the extravagance of Americans.

"Just consider," he said, "these new travelling bathtubs. I understand they're getting as common as electric elevators. A reporter was telling me about them. He called on a cotton broker one Sunday morning. The man received him in his dressing-room, and after their business talk was over the wonders of the house were taken up. The broker boasted about his Raphaels and hardwood floors, his light plant and French

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

furniture, his gold-plated plumbing and Gobelins, but he boasted above all about his travelling bathtub.

“‘It’s onyx,’ he said, ‘a lovely golden shade. It runs by electricity, on tiny pneumatic tires, smooth and silent. Whenever I don’t feel disposed to leave this room it comes in here to me filled, just as I like it, with genuine Atlantic Ocean, brought up from Coney Island and warmed to 80 degrees. It comes in any time I push this button.’

“‘Push it now,’ said the reporter, curiously.

“The button was pushed, the doors slid magically open, and the great onyx bath glided in stately silence into the room. But in it sat the millionaire’s astonished wife.”

THE ONLY ONE

AT A revival meeting, the evangelist, working himself up to the height of emotionalism, after having been dilating upon the weaknesses of mankind in general, suddenly exclaimed:

“Who is the most perfect man? Is there such a being? If anybody has ever seen the perfect man, let him say so now.”

A small nervous man rose quietly in the rear

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

of the hall. The evangelist gazed at him in astonishment.

"Do you mean to say, sir, that you know who is the perfect man?"

"I certainly do."

"Who may he be?"

There was a breathless silence as the man replied effectively.

"My wife's first husband."

A W F U L !

SOME time ago a man at Ypsilanti, Michigan, became crazed on the subject of hypnotism, and was sent on a Michigan Central train to an asylum. When the conductor asked for tickets the crazy man began telling of his hypnotic powers.

"I'll hypnotize you," he said.

"Fire away," replied the conductor. The man made several passes before the conductor's face.

"Now you are hypnotized," he said. The conductor looked the part as best he could.

"You're a conductor," the hypnotist said.

"That's right," replied the victim.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"You're a good conductor," went on the hypnotist.

"Right again," said the conductor.

"You don't smoke, drink, or swear at your passengers. You are honest. You turn in all the tickets and money you collect from passengers. In fact, you do not steal a cent."

"That's right," asserted the conductor. The hypnotist eyed him a moment, then said:

"What an awful fix you'd be in if I left you in this condition."

HIS LAPSE

ONE of the soldiers of Fort Washington on the Potomac was recently given leave of absence the morning after pay day. When his leave expired he didn't appear. He was brought at last before the commandant for sentence, and the following dialogue is recorded:

"Well, Murphy, you look as if you had had a severe engagement."

"Yes, sur,"

"Have you any money left?"

"No, sur,"

"You had \$35 when you left the fort, didn't you?"

"Yes, sur."

“What did you do with it?”

“Well, sur, I was walking along and I met a friend, and we went into a place and spint \$8. Thin we came out and I met another friend and we spint \$8 more, and thin I come out and we met another friend and we spint \$8 more, and then we come out and we met another bunch of friends, and I spint \$8 more — and thin I comes home.”

“But, Murphy, that makes only \$32. What did you do with the other three?” Murphy thought. Then he shook his head slowly and said:

“I dunno, Colonel; I reckon I must have squandered that money foolishly.”

NOT MUCH!

THE day before she was to be married the old negro servant came to her mistress and intrusted her savings to her keeping.

“Why should I keep it? I thought you were going to get married,” said her mistress.

“So I is, missus, but do you 'spose I'd keep all dis money in the house wid that strange nigger?”

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING

THE young evangelist with a pompadour was relieving himself of momentous thoughts.

"The Being that filled with surging seas the vast caverns of the oceans," he proclaimed, "also holds in serial suspense the aggregations of the tiny drops that give to each wondering eye the marvellous spectacle of a separate rainbow. The Omnipotence that made me, made a daisy."

COURTEOUS

A CERTAIN defendant acknowledged that he hadn't spoken to his wife in five years, and the judge took a hand from the bench in examining the witness.

"What explanation have you," he said severely to the defendant, "for not speaking to your wife for five years?"

"Your honour," replied the husband, "I didn't like to interrupt the lady."

WHERE IGNORANCE WAS NOT BLISS

A WIDELY known clergyman was one afternoon pacing the deck of a steamship that was bringing him back to this country, when he

chanced to observe a pair of individuals more than usually seasick. One, the woman, reclining in her steamer chair, exhibited that pallor of mal de mer that betrays utter despair and indifference to whatever may come; and the other, a man, just as ill as the lady, was crouched at her feet with his head in her lap, looking for all the world like a poor friendless dog that had sought comfort of the nearest living being. So deeply touched by this unhappy spectacle was the good divine that he approached the wretched couple and inquired of the woman in his most sympathetic tones whether there was any assistance he could render. The woman shook her head, sadly, murmuring:

“There is none, thanks.”

Then, after a moment's pause, the clergyman suggested:

“Perhaps, then, I may be of some service to your husband here.”

Without so much as moving her head, the unfortunate merely glanced indifferently at the head in her lap. Then, in a tone indicating her complete lack of interest in her companion in misery, she replied faintly:

“He isn't my husband. I — I — don't know who he is.”

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

A SUPERFLUOUS QUESTION

A BISHOP was travelling in a mining country and encountered an old Irishman turning a windlass which hauled up ore out of a shaft. It was his work to do this all day long. His hat was off, and the sun was pouring down on his unprotected head.

"Don't you know the sun will injure your brain if you expose it like that?" said the bishop.

The Irishman wiped the sweat off his forehead and looked at the clergyman. "Do you think I'd be doing this all day if I had any brains?" he said.

REJECTED

ONE night a New Yorker went into a skyscraping hotel and ordered a lobster. When it arrived it was found to have only one claw, and he demanded an explanation.

"Ah, lobsters, they are great fighters," said the waiter; "they fight much, and often one will its claw lose."

"My! is that so?" exclaimed the New Yorker. "Take this one away, and bring me a winner."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

UP TO THEM

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN was the guest of honour in an important city. The mayor presided, and when coffee was being served he leaned over and touched Mr. Chamberlain, saying:

“Shall we let the people enjoy themselves a little longer, or had we better have our speech now?”

DECLINED

A LITTLE boy was sitting on one of the benches in Central Park, New York, watching people ride the donkeys. An exceedingly fat woman hired a donkey and was about to mount when she saw the small boy and said to him:

“Little boy, don’t you want me to hire a donkey for you too?”

“No, thank you. I’d rather sit here and laugh.”

BEST THEY COULD DO

IN THE days when William Jennings Bryan was not so well known, a widely admired campaign speaker in Nebraska, who had been billed to make the principal address at a political

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

gathering at Lincoln, was obliged at the last moment, on account of illness, to send word that he could not keep the appointment. It chanced that Mr. Bryan was selected to fill his place. Naturally, Mr. Bryan felt some nervousness, knowing that he was to act as substitute for an older and much better known speaker, and his apprehension was not lessened when he heard himself thus announced by the chairman:

"Feller-citizens, this here's the substitute for our gallant an' admired leader, unfortunately sick. I don't know what this gent can do; but time was short an' we had to take what we could get."

TIT FOR TAT

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES was strolling on the beach one day when he began chatting with a little girl who was building pyramids of sand. His charm of personality had its customary effect and the child soon slipped her hand in his and walked with him. By and by the little one said she must return to her mother.

"Good-bye, my dear," said Mr. Holmes, "and when mother asks you where you have been, tell her that you have been walking on the beach with Oliver Wendell Holmes."

The great name was absolutely unknown to the child, but she recognized the courtesy in the words of her stranger friend and was not to be outdone. His pleasant smile and bow acquired a quaint gravity as imitated by the child. She replied:

"And when you go home and they ask you where you have been, tell them that you were walking on the beach with Mary Susanna Brown."

A COLD RECEPTION

THEY were newly married, according to the *New York Sun*, and on a honeymoon trip. They put up at a skyscraper hotel. The bridegroom felt indisposed and the bride said she would slip out and do a little shopping. In due time she returned and tripped blithely up to her room a little awed by the number of doors that looked all alike. But she was sure of her own and tapped gently on the panel.

"I'm back, honey! Let me in!" she whispered. No answer.

"Honey, honey! It's Mabel! Let me in!"

There was a silence for several seconds. Then a man's voice, cold and full of dignity, came from the other side of the door.

"Madam, this is not a beehive. It's a bathroom."

CALLED DOWN

THE manager of the big department store stood stock still outside the little boxlike chamber which held the telephone of the establishment, for he was a very startled manager indeed. Within the chamber he could hear Miss Jones, the stenographer, speaking, and this is a scrap of the conversation the startled man overheard:

"I love you, dear, and only you! I'm weeping my heart away. Yes, my darling, speak to me once more! I love you, dear, I love you so!"

The young woman rang off and stepped out of the cabinet to confront the angry manager.

"Miss Jones," he said, "that telephone has been fixed where it is for the purpose of convenience in conducting business and not for love-making in office hours. I am surprised at you. Don't let it occur again."

The young woman froze him with a glance. "I was ordering some new songs for No. 3 Department," she explained icily.

A VOCAL STANDARD

A WELL-KNOWN Doctor of Divinity, who may be nameless here, was once touring a sparsely settled part of the country, and one night put up at a comfortable looking farmhouse, where he soon got upon cordial terms with the family. Next morning, coming down to breakfast, he found the men folks all departed to work and the farmer's wife waiting to prepare his breakfast.

"How do you like your eggs?" she inquired solicitously.

"Medium well done," was the answer.

Whereupon the good hostess retired to the kitchen whence in a few moments came the sound of her voice singing, "Nearer, My God, to Thee." The doctor, being a good singer himself, joined heartily in this morning hymn.

After singing three verses the lady suddenly stopped and forthwith appeared with the eggs.

"What was the matter with the fourth verse?" the minister asked, with a smile.

"Oh, you said you liked your eggs medium, so I sang three verses. It takes four verses to boil 'em hard."

SENTIMENT

THE girls had seen a picture of the life-saving corps organized by the young ladies of an English town, and decided to form a similar brigade. Filled with a burning enthusiasm to be of some civic use, they immediately organized. The drill consisted in getting around a large blanket and holding it to catch unfortunates who should jump from the second or third stories of burning buildings.

But the fair members of the corps wanted some real practice.

After much persuasion, a young man, deeply enamoured of one of the members, was prevailed upon to fall into the blanket from the top of a barn.

The life-savers gathered one afternoon, attired in becoming uniform, and twelve gathered around the blanket and took a firm grip. Then the accommodating young man climbed up on the roof of the building, made ready, and jumped. Each girl was gazing upward, and at the terrible sight of a man falling through the air they were all so shocked that, without thinking, twenty-four hands went up to as many eyes to shut out the view. The brave young man is still confined to his room.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

NOT OVERLOOKED

IN ILLINOIS there is an old law on the statute books to the effect that in criminal cases the jury "judge of the law as well as of the facts." Though not often quoted, once in a while a lawyer with a desperate case makes use of it. In one case the judge instructed the jury that it was to judge of the law as well as the facts, but added that it was not to judge the law unless it was fully satisfied that it knew more law than the judge. An outrageous verdict was brought in, contrary to all instructions of the court, who felt called upon to rebuke the jury. At last one old farmer arose.

"Judge," said he, "weren't we to judge the law as well as the facts?"

"Certainly," was the response; "but I told you not to judge the law unless you were clearly satisfied that you knew the law better than I did."

"Well, Jedge," answered the farmer, as he shifted his quid, "we considered that pint."

ALL OVER

TWO city men went to the country to spend their vacations, and in a field one hot afternoon a bull made for them. Frightened out of

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

their wits, the two men scampered round and round the field, the bull too close to their heels to give them time to scale the barb-wire fence. At length, however, the nimbler man got a small lead and managed to get over the fence to safety. He stood in the road, then, and shouted encouragement to his friend. His friend needed encouragement. He was certainly having a dreadful time of it. Round the field he dashed and the bull's lowered and ferocious head was always within a few yards of his coat-tails. Quite fifty times he must have made the circuit. On the fifty-first he shouted, as he tore past his comrade:

"Give my farewell message to the wife and little ones. This is my last time round."

THE AMERICAN GAMIN

JEAN GERARDY, the well-known 'cellist, at a dinner in Philadelphia, praised American wit.

"You are all witty," he said. "From your millionaire down to your gamin you are quick, nimble, and sparkling in retort. Your gamin's wit is sometimes cruel. It caused a friend of mine to flush and mutter an evil oath one day last

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

week in New York. My friend, in a hurry to catch a train, ran out of his hotel toward a cab, and a ragged little boy opened the cab door for him and handed in his valise. He gave the boy nothing. In his hurry, you see, he forgot. The disappointed urchin smiled sourly, and called this order to the driver:

““Nearest poorhouse, cabby.””

· NO FOOL

IN A New York street a wagon loaded with lamp globes collided with a truck and many of the globes were smashed. Considerable sympathy was felt for the driver, as he gazed ruefully at the shattered fragments. A benevolent looking old gentleman eyed him compassionately.

“My poor man,” he said, “I suppose you will have to make good this loss out of your own pocket?”

“Yep,” was the melancholy reply.

“Well, well,” said the philanthropic old gentleman. “Hold out your hat — here’s a quarter for you, and I dare say some of these other people will give you a helping hand, too.” The driver held out his hat and several persons hastened to drop coins in it. At last, when the

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

contributors had ceased, he emptied the contents of his hat into his pocket. Then pointing to the retreating figure of the philanthropist who had started the collection, he observed:

"Say, maybe he ain't the wise guy! That's me boss!"

THIS is told of one of the Camerons of Lochiel: The chief, when bivouacking with his son in the snow, noticed that the lad had rolled up a snowball to make a pillow. He thereupon rose and kicked it away, saying sternly, "No effeminacy, boy."

AT HIS first wedding engagement, as officiating clergyman, a nervous young minister asked: "Is it kistomary to cuss the bride?"

MARK TWAIN, in an after-dinner speech in Bermuda, once talked of gratitude. He didn't much care, he said, for gratitude of the noisy, boisterous kind. "Why," he exclaimed, "when some men discharge an obligation, you can hear the report for miles around."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

SOLID FOUNDATION

TICKETS," said the collector, as he opened the door of the carriage in which sat a man who looked as if he was anchored to his seat. The man handed over the required pasteboard, which was duly inspected. Then, looking around the collector said:

"Is there another gentleman in the carriage?"

"No."

"Is that other portmanteau yours, then, too?"

"Other portmanteau?"

"Yes; on the floor there, by the other."

"Those," said the traveller, with dignity, "are my feet."

EASY

WHEN Grant's army crossed the Rappahannock, Lee's veterans felt sure of sending it back as "tattered and torn" as ever it had been under the new general's numerous predecessors. After the crossing, the first prisoners caught by Mosby were asked many questions by curious Confederates.

"What has become of your pontoon train?" said one such inquirer.

"We haven't got any," answered the prisoner.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"How do you expect to get over the river when you go back?"

"Oh," said the Yankee, "we are not going back. Grant says that all the men he sends back can cross on a log."

A LABOURER

THE pompous judge glared sternly over his spectacles at the tattered prisoner who had been dragged before the bar of justice on a charge of vagrancy.

"Have you ever earned a dollar in your life?" he asked in fine scorn.

"Yes, your honour," was the response, "I voted for you at the last election."

A UNIVERSAL DEFINITION

AN EXACT definition of a gentleman has been tried many times, never perhaps with entirely satisfactory results, but this, reported in the *Woman's Home Companion*, betrays its source: Little Sadie had never heard of any of the definitions, but she managed to throw a gleam of light on the subject. The word was in the spelling lesson, and the teacher said:

"Sadie, what is a gentleman?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Please, ma'am," she answered, "a gentleman's a man you don't know very well."

HARMONIOUS

MRS. SMITH was engaging a new servant, and sat facing the latest applicant.

"I hope," she said, "that you had no angry words with your last mistress before leaving?"

"Oh, dear, no, mam; none whatever," was the reply, with a toss of her head. "While she was having her bath, I just locked the bathroom door, took all my things, and went away as quiet as possible."

COMPLETING THE LIST

SHE was one of those kind of women who want to see everything there is in the store. She was looking for hose, and the obsequious and obliging clerk got down everything in sight within a radius of half a mile. After the counters had been strewn with hose and hose of every size and shape and colour — box on box, dozens on dozens — he waved his arm around and said:

"There, madam, is our stock."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Is that all that you have?" said the lady, her voice showing disappointment.

The clerk paused.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied, "except the pair I've got on."

A HOLD UP

A LADY carrying a little dog in her arms was riding along Park Lane in a 'bus. All the way up she worried the conductor to know whether they had come to No. —, mentioning a house nearly at the top. When they reached this number the conductor stopped the 'bus, thinking the lady wished to alight there. Instead of doing this, however, she went to the door of the 'bus and, holding up the dog, said: "Look, Fido, that's where your mother was born!"

BETTER THAN AN OFFICER

SHORTLY after a Dover lawyer was admitted to the bar he had a case which was tried before a North Adams justice of the peace, and was opposed by a lawyer whose eloquence attracted a large crowd. The justice was perspiring in the crowded room and evidently fast losing his temper. Finally he drew off his coat,

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

and in the midst of the eloquent address, burst out:

"Mr. Attorney, supposing that you take your seat and let Mr. Dawes speak. I want to thin out this crowd."

A GENTLEMAN who had been led by curiosity to visit the Positivist Church in London, where the Doctrine of Humanity was preached to a select few, being asked what he had found there, replied:

✓ "Three persons and no God."

A N ART critic, describing a recent collection of bric-a-brac, says:

"The visitor's eye will be struck on entering the room with a porcelain umbrella." This is encouraging to visitors.

SIMULTANEOUS

A BRIDGEPORT lady relates, she was riding in a Brooklyn street car, in which a drunken man was making himself obnoxious. After telling the conductor a dozen times or so where he wanted to stop, the inebriated individual at last

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

seized the bell rope and pulled so vigorously that the bell rang at both ends of the car.

"What che doin'?" growled the conductor:
"What-che-ring both bells fer?"

"Cuz, cuz, I-er-want, er-hic-both ends thish car to stop o' course," was the reply.

DEDUCTIVE

SUPERINTENDENT: "Children, this is the Rev. Dr. MacSnorter, from Gowanus, who will address you with a few brief remarks. Children, he has come all the way to try and save your souls from hell. You are not paying attention. Now, can any little boy or girl tell me where this gentleman is from?"

Chorus of children: "From hell."

BIRDS OF A FEATHER

BARON DOWSE, the celebrated Irish judge, once said in that exaggerated "brogue" which he loved to employ:

"I was down in Cork last month, holding assizes. On the first day, when the jury came in, the officer of the court said: 'Gintleman av the jury, ye'll take your accustomed places, if

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

ye plaze.' And may I never laugh," said the baron, "if they didn't all walk into the dock."

AN AMBASSADOR having come to Sparta from Perinthus, spoke at great length.

"What answer shall I return to the Perinthians?" he asked.

"Say," replied the king, "that you talked a great deal, and that I did not utter a word."

CATO, the Greek, on observing that statues were being set up in honour of many, remarked:

"I would rather people would ask, why is there not a statue to Cato, than why there is."

HIS TRIAL

A MAN, arrested for murder, bribed an Irishman on the jury with £20 to hang out for a verdict of manslaughter. The jury were out a long time, and finally came in with a verdict of manslaughter. The man rushed up to the Irish juror and said: "I'm obliged to you, my friend. Did you have a hard time?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Yes," said the Irishman; "an awful hard time. The other eleven wanted to acquit yez."

MATCHED

A TRAVELLER, calling at a hotel, left his umbrella in the stand with a label attached on which was written in bold characters: "This umbrella belongs to a man who can deal a blow with his fist of the force of 250 pounds. Coming back in ten minutes."

Having accomplished his errand, he went to look for his umbrella, but found in its place a card inscribed as follows: "This card belongs to a man who can run fifteen miles an hour. Isn't coming back."

AN ACUTE JUDGE

AT THE Uonne assizes, in France, before the trial of a certain case, the presiding judge remarked, on seeing the court crowded with ladies: "The persons composing the audience are probably not aware of the nature of the case about to be tried. I therefore feel it incumbent on me to request all respectable women to withdraw."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

Not one of the ladies stirred from her place.

"Usher," the judge continued, "now that all the respectable women have left, turn the others out."

DILATORY

THE Judge Blanks of Alameda are an old-fashioned family and there never has been any lack of childish prattle in their home this twenty years and more.

"How many of your children," asked the rector, on a recent pastoral visit, "have not yet been baptized?"

"Why, let me see, there's Blanche and Robert, and Seth, and Rebecca, and the baby. Dear me, I had no idea there were so many since our last christening! We'll be on hand next Sunday in full force, and I shall never let so many accumulate again."

HAUGHTY

IT WAS Sunday morning during the crowded hour in a fashionable Fifth Avenue church. A supercilious lady, having alighted from an automobile, entered and walked up the aisle. When she got to her pew, her nose went up in

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

the air as she saw that it was occupied by some one else. Trembling with rage, she turned and went back the aisle to the usher, her face betraying her agitation.

"What does this mean?" she whispered in tones that could be heard by every one. "Some one is occupewing my pie."

STATURE

DR. OLIVER W. HOLMES was small in stature. Upon one occasion he was present at a meeting which happened to be attended by a number of very large men, thus making his diminutive size rather conspicuous in contrast. One of these men — doubtless wishing to make him feel at ease — came up to him and said:

"Well, Dr. Holmes, I should think you would feel rather small among all these fellows."

"I do," replied the doctor; "I feel like a three-penny ~~cent~~ piece among a lot of pennies."

NOT HIS FAULT

AT A wedding feast recently the bridegroom was called upon, as usual, to respond to the given toast, in spite of the fact that he had

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

previously pleaded to be excused. Blushing to the roots of his hair, he rose to his feet. He intended to imply that he was unprepared for speech-making, but he unfortunately placed his hand upon his bride's shoulder, and looked down at her as he stammered out his opening and concluding words:

"This — er — thing has been forced upon me."

SELF-PRESERVATION

ONE of the members of a travelling man's association took his family out to a fair, and as they were spending the day there, they brought along a well-filled lunch basket. The crowd became very dense, and fearing that they would become separated, the head of the family said: "Give me that lunch basket, wifey; don't you see that we are sure to lose each other in this crowd?"

DENIAL

THREE tired citizens — a lawyer, a doctor, and a newspaper man — sat in a back room recently in the gray light of the early dawn. On the table were many empty bottles and a couple of packs of cards. As they sat in silence, a rat

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

scurried across the hearth into the darkness beyond. The three men shifted their feet and looked at each other uneasily. After a long pause the lawyer spoke: "I know what you fellows are thinking," he said; "you think I thought I saw a rat, but I didn't."

COMPASSION

A FRENCH general's wife, whose tongue-lashing ability was far-famed, demanded that an old servant, who had served with her husband during the wars, be dismissed.

"Jacques," said the general, "go to your room and pack your trunk and leave — depart."

The old Frenchman clasped his hands to his head with dramatic joy. "Me — I can go!" he exclaimed in a very ecstasy of gratitude. Then suddenly his manner changed, as with the utmost compassion he added: "But you, my poor general, you must stay."

EXTRAVAGANT

SOME years ago when Speaker Cannon was a plain member, he took some of his constituents to dine with him at a rather good hotel in

Washington. It was in the fall and Mr. Cannon ate very heartily of that American edible, Indian corn; in fact, almost his entire dinner consisted of corn. The Westerner looked at him and said:

"Say, Mr. Cannon, what does it cost you to board here?"

"About five dollars a day," said Mr. Cannon.

"I'll be durned," drawled his constituent, "ef I don't think it would be cheaper fer you to board at a livery stable!"

SPECIFICATIONS

CAPTAIN DE FOREST CHANDLER, of the U. S. Signal Corps, an expert aeronaut, said: "Inexperience is usually to be blamed for these accidents. The aeronaut goes up alone before he has thoroughly learned his business. Indeed I have seen some aeronauts so untried that they remind me of an episode that befell my tailor. A young man visited my tailor the other day and said: 'I'm a rower and I want to be measured for two pairs of rowing pants — the kind with the sliding seats.'"

THE fair maid was seated on a sofa in front of the window when the young man entered the parlour.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Shall I — er — pull down the blind?" he asked.

"Well — er — that depends on where you are going to sit," she replied. And so the blind was pulled down.

A VERY bald-headed man went into a barber-shop and plumping himself down in the chair, said: "Hair cut!"

The barber looked at him a moment and replied: "Why, man, you don't need no hair cut — what you want is a shine."

THE pretty nurse had taken the best care of the steel millionaire.

"I want you to marry me," said he simply.

"But, Mr. Giltredge, this is rather sudden."

"I know, child, I know. But you'll have plenty of time to get used to the idea. I'll have a fierce time getting rid of my wife."

A BARGAIN

GEORGE COHAN, comedian and playwright, was praising, at the Lambs' Club, the humorous value of suggestions.

2/ you ... Pa,

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"It is funnier to suggest a thing," he said, "than to say it out. Playwrights should remember this. Suggestion, pregnant suggestion, is what makes really funny the little boy's remark to his father: 'Pa, if you help me with my arithmetic lesson to-night I'll tell you where ma hid your trousers.'"

P R E C I S E

PEPI: Mama, may I say something?

Mama: You know the rule is that you must not speak at the table.

Pepi: But may I say just one word?

Mama: No, Pepi; but when papa has finished the paper then you may speak.

(Papa finally lays the paper on the table.)

Mama: Now, Pepi, what did you wish to say?

Pepi: I wanted to tell you that the water is running over the tub on to the floor in the bathroom.

CAPTAIN: "Do you see that captain on the bridge five miles away?"

Tar: "Aye, aye, sir."

"Let him have one of these 12-inch shells in the eye."

"Which eye, sir?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

HIS IDENTITY

A LADY in a southern town received notice from her cook that that lady was about to leave her service in order to enter into the bold state of matrimony.

"Why," said she, "Chloe, I didn't even know you had an admirer."

"Oh, yaas, ma'am, for some time."

"Who can it be, Chloe?"

"Don't you 'member, Miss Lizzie, dat I attended de funeral ob a fren' ob mine about two weeks ago?"

"Yes."

✓ "Waal, ma'am, it's de corpse's husband."

THE STORY OF A DOG AND AN EMPTY HOLE

THE first summer which we spent at Lenox we had along a very intelligent dog named Noble. He was learned in many things and by his dog lore excited the undying admiration of all the children. But there were some things which Noble could never learn. Having on one occasion seen a red squirrel run into a hole in a stone wall, he could not be persuaded that he was not there for evermore.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

Several red squirrels lived close to the house and had become familiar, but not tame. They kept up a regular romp with Noble. They would come down from the maple tree with provoking coolness; they would run along the fence almost within reach; they would cock their tails and sail across the road to the barn, and yet there was such a well-timed calculation under this apparent rashness that Noble invariably arrived at the critical spot just as the squirrel left it.

On one occasion Noble was so close upon his red-backed friend that, unable to get up the maple tree, he dodged into a hole in the wall, ran through the chinks, emerged at a little distance, and sprang into the tree. The intense enthusiasm of the dog at that hole can hardly be described. He filled it full of barking. He pawed and scratched as if undermining a bastion. Standing off at a little distance, he would pierce the hole with a gaze as intense and fixed as if he were trying magnetism upon it. Then, with tail extended and every hair thereon electrified, he would rush at the hole with prodigious onslaught.

The imaginary squirrel haunted Noble night and day. The very squirrel himself would run up before his face into the tree, and, crouched in a crotch, would sit silently watching the whole

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

process of bombarding the empty hole with great sobriety and relish. But Noble would allow of no doubts. His conviction that that hole had a squirrel in it continued unshaken for six weeks. When all other occupations failed, the hole remained for him. When there were no more chickens to harry, no pigs to bite, no cattle to chase, no children to romp with, no expeditions to make with the grown folks, and when he had slept all that his dog skin would hold, he would walk out of the yard, yawn, and stretch himself, and then look wistfully at the hole, as if thinking to himself: "Well, as there is nothing else to do I may as well try that hole again!"—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

PRACTICAL

SOON after the first baby was born, a certain man's wife went upstairs one evening and found him standing by the side of the crib and gazing earnestly at the child. She was touched by the sight, and tears filled her eyes. Her arms stole softly around his neck as she rubbed her cheek caressingly against his shoulder. He started lightly at the touch. "Darling," he murmured dreamily, "it is incomprehensible to me how they can get up such a crib as that for 99 cents."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

THE BLACK SHEEP

A PHILADELPHIAN who was formerly a resident of a town in the north of Pennsylvania recently revisited his old home. "What became of the Hoover family?" he asked an old friend.

"Oh," answered the latter, "Tom Hoover did very well. Got to be an actor out West. Bill, the other brother, is something of an artist in New York; and Mary, the sister, is doing literary work. But John never amounted to very much. It took all he could lay his hands on to support the others."

A COUNTRY convert, full of zeal, in his first prayer-meeting remarks, offered himself for service. "I am ready to do anything the Lord asks of me," said he, "so long as it's honourable."

TACT

THE possessor of unfailing tact is a fortunate being. Sometimes even a person of great experience will, however, in distress, say the wrong thing.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

A certain clergyman was officiating at a funeral of a wealthy parishioner. He was particularly anxious to show his good feeling and sympathy; so at a critical moment during the funeral services, he turned to the congregation and said:

"Dearly beloved, many a time I have dangled this corpse upon my knee."

REPUDIATED

A FABULOUSLY rich man who was noted for his economies died. He appeared at the gates of heaven. He was met by St. Peter. Gabriel, as recorder of deeds, sat near by. St. Peter said:

"What have you done to cause you to think that you should come into heaven?"

"Well," said the applicant timidly, "I met a crippled child and gave it two cents."

"Um-m," said St. Peter, "that was something. Is that all right, Gabriel?"

"Yes," grudgingly answered Gabriel.

"That is not enough. Anything else?" asked St. Peter.

"Yes. I met a newsboy. He was crying because he was stuck with his evening papers. I bought a paper."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Um-m," said St. Peter; "that was good. Is that all right, Gabriel?"

Gabriel referred to his books and answered in the affirmative.

St. Peter thought an instant, and then walked over to Gabriel. They consulted in low tones. Finally Gabriel closed his records with a bang and said impatiently:

"Oh, give him back his three cents and tell him to go to hell."

HIS TASK

WITH a scowling brow the vaudeville agent awaited the next applicant. A long, lanky individual came to his desk and in funereal tones said, "Good day, sir."

"Well, what do you want?"

"I need a job just now about as much as anything else," answered the lean person.

"Ever had any experience?"

"Oh, indeed, I have been with ——"

"Chop it short. I know you've been with all the big stars from Hamlet to omelet. That doesn't cut any freeze with me. What's your line?"

"I — I — I'm a — a — a — a comedian."

"Well, then, make me laugh."

KNEW HIM

YOU know how lean Senator Ingalls was?" said a Kansas man to a *Tribune* reporter. "Well, down in Atchison there was a doctor who was a great friend of his. This doctor had been greatly annoyed by a newsboy who would come into his office very unceremoniously and pester him by trying to sell newspapers.

"One day when Ingalls was in the office the boy was heard coming up the stairs and the doctor decided to put up a job on him. He rushed out an articulated skeleton, placed it in a chair by the desk, and then the two men withdrew to the back room.

"In rushed the boy and, without noticing what was at the desk, came directly up to the skeleton. When he looked up and saw it grinning at him he was nearly scared into convulsions and bolted for the door yelling bloody murder. The joke tickled the doctor, but Ingalls's conscience pricked him, and going to the window he looked out at the boy who was standing below crying.

"'Come upstairs, my boy,' he said. 'I'll buy one of your papers.'

"But the newsy began to yell harder than ever, and between the sobs he managed to blubber out:

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

“‘Oh, you can’t fool me even if you have put your clothes on.’”

RESOURCEFULNESS OF THE WHEELBARROW

IF YOU have occasion to use a wheelbarrow I leave it, when you are through with it, in front of the house with the handles toward the door. A wheelbarrow is the most complicated thing to fall over on the face of the earth. A man would fall over one when he would never think of falling over anything else. He never knows when he has got through falling over it, either; for it will tangle up his legs and arms, turn over with him, and rear up in front of him, and just as he pauses in his profanity to congratulate himself, it takes a new turn and scoops more skin off him, and he commences to evolve anew and bump himself on fresh places.

A man never ceases to fall over a wheelbarrow until it turns completely on its back, or brings up against something it cannot upset. It is the most inoffensive looking object there is, but it is more dangerous than a locomotive, and no man is secure with one unless he has a tight hold of its handles and is sitting down on something.

A wheelbarrow has its uses, without doubt, but

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD
in its leisure moments it is the great blighting
curse on true dignity.— *J. M. Bailey*

THE DACHSHUND

THIS is what the boy wrote about the dachshund:

“The dockshund is a dorg notwithstanding appeerencis. He has fore legs, two in front and two behind, and they ain’t on speakin’ terms. I wunst made a dockshund out of a cowcumber an’ fore matchis, an’ it lookt as nacheral as life. Dockshounds is farely intelligent considerin’ thare shaip. Thare brains bein’ so far away frum thare tales it bothers them sum to wag the lattur. I wunst noo a dockshound who wuz too impashunt to wate till he cood signal the hole length of his boddy when he wanted to wag his tale, so he maid it up with his tale thet when he wanted it to wag he would shake his rite ear, an’ when the tale seen it shake it would wag. But as for me, gimme a bull pup with a peddygree.”

INFORMATION WANTED

IT WAS the mayor of a western city who received the following inquiry from an eastern resident:

Kind and respected Cir: I see in a paper that

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

a man named John Sipes was atacted and et up by a bare whose cubs he was trying to git when the she bare came up and stopt him by eating him up in the mountaines near your town. What I want to know is did it kill him or was he only partly et up and is he from this place and all about the bare! I don't know but what he is a distant husband of mine. My first husband was of that name and I supposed he was killed in the war and the name of the man the bare et being the same I thought it might be him after all and I ought to know it if he wasn't killed either in the war or by the bare for I have been married twice since and there ought to be divorce papers got out by him and me. He sings base and has a spread eagle tatoed on his front chest and a ankor on his right arm which you will know him by if the bare did not eat up these sines of its being him. If alive don't tell him I am married to Joe White for he never liked Joe. Mebbe you'd better let on as if I am ded. That is if the bare did not eat him all up. If it did I don't see as you can do anything and you needn't take no trouble. Please ancer back.

P. S. Was the bare killed. Also was he married again and did he leave any property wuth me laying claim to.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

RETRIBUTION

THE following notice was recently found tacked on the door of a local church: "There will be preaching in this house a week from next Wednesday, Providence permitting, and there will be preaching here whether or no on Monday following upon the same subject, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned at 3:30 in the afternoon."

SYMPATHY

REV. B. of New York is a very popular preacher, and every day many persons visit him at his home in search of religious consolation or of advice. The very small daughter of the house is quite observing, and much to the surprise of her parents seems to take a great interest in her father's callers. One day when her father was away a noted bishop called to see him on business connected with the church. The little girl answered his ring at the doorbell.

"Is your father in, my little maid?" the great man asked kindly.

Two round blue eyes gazed at him solemnly for a few seconds; then she took hold of his hand

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

and in a voice filled with compassion said: "No, father is not in now, but come, poor dying sinner; mother will pray for you."

EVIDENCE

A STORY is told of a very popular cavalry officer. He was being tried for drunkenness and among the other witnesses was his Irish soldier servant.

The court, anxious to give the officer every chance, put several questions to this witness with view to eliciting any facts that might be in his master's favour.

When the Irishman said that his master, on going to bed, had expressed a wish to be called early, the court was distinctly pleased. A man who gave special instructions to be called early, they argued to themselves, could not have been drunk.

Hoping to get favourable particulars they put further questions.

"And why did Major —— wish to be called early?"

Then, "Faith an' he tould me it was because he was to be queen of the May."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

✓ A LAUDABLE REASON

A PREACHER had ordered a load of hay from one of his parishioners. About noon the parishioner's little son came to the house crying lustily. On being asked what the matter was he said that the load of hay had tipped over in the street. The preacher, a kindly man, assured the little fellow that it was nothing serious, and asked him in to dinner.

"Pa wouldn't like it," said the boy.

But the preacher assured him that he would fix it all right with his father and urged him to take dinner before going for the hay. After dinner the boy was asked if he was not glad that he had stayed.

"Pa won't like it," he persisted.

The preacher, unable to understand, asked the boy what made him think his father would object.

✓ "Why, you see, pa's under the hay," explained the boy.

PURELY PERSONAL

PROFESSOR HUGH W. RANSOM of Harvard has been working as a labourer in the Cambridge subway in order to compile certain statistics at first hand. "To do our work well," said the professor to a reporter, "we must use

enterprise. We must ignore the minor conventions. But we mustn't go as far as — But listen: A Boston doctor sat in a front seat in a Tremont Street theatre the other night. In the breathless silence, as the third act neared its climax, there was a commotion near the door, and then a grave voice said: 'Is Dr. Blank in the audience?' Dr. Blank rose calmly. He passed down the aisle with the serious self-contained air of one on who the life of a fellow-creature depends. A young man awaited him at the door. 'Well,' said the doctor. 'Well, sir, what is it?' 'Doctor,' said the young man, as he drew a large wallet from his breast pocket, 'I'm Cash & Payup's new collector. Would it be convenient for you to settle that small account this evening?'"

MODESTY

A HIGHLAND landlady chatting with a neighbour told that one of the village girls was just married, and opined that she had been "an auld maid owerlang," to take kindly to matrimony. "An auld maid," she added, "is like to be awful ignorant where men folks are concerned." "She is that!" assented the neighbour. "Do ye mind my husband's brither? He

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

was a schulmaster — a weel-built, weel-faured man as ye may ken, we' braid shouthers an' gey tall. A' well, Sandy McLean's mither had a gatherin' at her hoose on e'en, an' when they a' cam' to gae their ways hame the men tuik the maids an' saw them to their biding places. My brither-in-law tuik an auld maid wha keepit a wee shop in the toon. When they reached their journey's end, he aye bent to kiss her cheek, as was the custom in seein' hame. Noo Jeannot (the auld maid) was in a gret fluster. 'Oh! Mr. Cameron,' says she — an' she was all in a tremmle — 'what am I to dae? Must I lift my veil?'"

HE DREW THE LINE

AN IRISHMAN one day went into a barber shop to get shaved. After he was seated and the lather about half applied the barber was called to an adjoining room, where he was detained for some time. The barber had in the shop a pet monkey which was continually imitating his master. As soon as the latter left the room the monkey grabbed the brush and proceeded to finish lathering the Irishman's face. After doing this he took a razor from its case and stropped it and then turned to the Irishman to shave him.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Shtop that," said the latter firmly. "Ye can tuck the towel in me neck and put the soap on me face, but, begorrah, yer father's got to shave me."

A L L

A MAN was walking along the street, and he saw a house on fire. He rushed across the way and rang the bell. After some time a lady, who proved to be slightly deaf, appeared at the door

"Madam, your house is on fire."

"What did you say?"

The man began dancing up and down. He pointed above.

"I said your house is afire! Flames bursting out! No time to lose!"

"What did you say?"

"House afire! Quick!"

The lady smiled.

"Is that all?" she said sweetly.

"Well," replied the man hopelessly, "that's all I can think of just now."

L I T E R A L

A T A French inn a guest was greatly disturbed one night by a series of incessant jumps and bumpings that appeared to proceed

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

from the room directly overhead. In the morning he complained to the hotel manager, and asked to have the mystery cleared up. A little later the manager brought a foreign-looking individual, and introduced him to the gentleman. "This is Baron von Kotchem Slocshen," explained the manager, "who occupies the room above yours. Perhaps you can tell us, sir, what was the noise that this gentleman complains of?"

"Why," said the baron indignantly, "it was the doctor's instructions. He leaf me a bottle of medicine, which say, 'Take the mixture two nights running, then skip the third night.' And so I do it. I haf run the first two nights, and last night I skip!"

PROFESSIONAL PRIDE

A NORTH CAROLINA lawyer says that when Judge Buxton of that state made his first appearance at the bar as a young lawyer he was given charge by the state's solicitor of the prosecution of a man charged with some misdemeanor. It soon appeared that there was no evidence against the man, but Buxton did his best, and was astonished when the jury brought in a verdict of "guilty." After the trial one of the jurors tapped the young attorney on the shoulder.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Buxton," he said, "we didn't think the feller was guilty, but at the same time we didn't like to discourage a young lawyer by acquitting him."

THE RIGHT COMBINATION

SHORTLY after a new administration took hold of a well-known Southern railroad a great number of claims were preferred against the company on account of horses and cattle being killed along the line in Kentucky. To make matters worse, it appeared that every animal killed, however worthless it may have been before the accident, invariably figured in the claim subsequently presented as being of the best blood in Kentucky. One day, in conversation with one of the road's attorneys, the president became very much excited in reference to the situation. "Do you know," he exclaimed, bringing down his fist on the desk by way of emphasis, "I have reached the conclusion that nothing in Kentucky so improves live stock as crossing it with a locomotive."

THE TRAINED NURSE

WHEN I was sick I had a trained nurse. She came in the still watches of one evening, and laid her soft, cool, twenty-five-dollar-a-week

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

hand on my burning pauper brow, and thenceforth her salary and my fever ran on together, not even stopping for meals — that is to say, the nurse herself stopped for meals, but not her salary. About noon each day, when the glad outside world was carolling to the sky, when the merry schoolboy was skipping homeward, and the flowers were dancing in the sunlight, she would part from me with tears in her eyes, and a choking sensation in her throat, and a look of keen agony, and slope gently downstairs, and spend a few hours over the family board, while the cook threatened to leave, and the hot-water bottle on my jaded stomach became frappé.

She came to me with a complete set of books, a clinical thermometer, and the story of her past life. When she had taken away my temperature, and gone off with it to some far corner of the room, and examined it critically by the light of a tallow-dip, and set it down in Ledger B, where I couldn't see it, she picked up her trusty pad, and began to write a historical novel of which I was the unhappy hero. From that moment, I felt that about me there was nothing sacred.

The second day after she came, when all the towels had been used up, and all my ingenious

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

children were paving the backyard with remnants of dry toast, and the doctor had told her all about me that she hadn't been able to find out herself, she began to relate to me the story of her past. Two weeks later, the crises in her story and my fever were both passed. We both survived; but, at this late day, I have an idea that her story is even now the more robust of the two.

The trained nurse is now a necessity in every modern home. As an antidote to medical science, she has no equal. Dressed in rich, but not too gaudy, bedticking, and armed with medals she won in the Crimean War for reading *Punch* aloud to the sick soldiers, she stands over one's bedside like a guardian angel, and no germ can pass the lines without giving the countersign.— T. L. M. —————

SAVED

CONTROLLER METZ of New York said one day of a bill that he disliked: "I object to this bill because it would accomplish nothing. It would make no real changes. It would be like the case of the actor and the canal boat captain. There was once upon a time an actor who, after an enforced idleness of two months,

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

was lucky enough to secure an engagement in a town twenty-five miles away. The case was a hurry up one. The actor had to reach the distant town that night. If he failed to arrive, then his part would be assigned to some one else. Well, the man patched his worn boots with patent thread, pinned up his few belongings in a newspaper, and set out in the early morning on foot along the tow-path. He had only a few coppers, hence the train was an impossibility. But after the poor fellow had covered six or seven miles his boots gave out, blisters rose on his feet, fatigue overcame him, and in despair he threw himself on the grass beneath a tree. As he lay there in a bitter mood, a canal boat hove in sight. It drew near slowly, and an idea seized the actor. 'Captain!' he shouted, rising hurriedly. 'Captain, pull up, for the love of heaven!'

"'Well, wot d'ye want?' said the captain, as he stopped the boat.

"'Captain,' said the actor, 'I have to get to Quag to-night to play second heavy in "The Evil That Men Do." I am footsore and weary and can walk no farther. If you will assist me I will work my passage.' The captain gave the actor a kindly nod.

"'Right y' are,' he said. 'Lead the hoss.'

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

“ ‘Thank goodness,’ cried the actor, ‘I am saved.’ ”

TENDER HEARTED

PRESIDENT MANUEL AMADOR of Panama was reviewing the wonders of Coney Island. “A remarkable place,” he said. “It impressed me tremendously. I shall never forget it. I am reminded of a joke I once heard about a Cuban millionaire. An unfortunate man obtained access to this millionaire, and depicted his wretched poverty in the most vivid and moving colours. Indeed, so graphic was the visitor’s narrative that the millionaire was very profoundly affected, and summoning his servant, he said with tears in his eyes and a voice trembling with emotion: ‘Guine, put this poor fellow out into the street. He is breaking my heart!’ ”

CIRCUMSTANTIAL

THERE is a young man in Boston who can actually trace his family back two generations. His one failing is a desire to be thought a descendant of one of “the old families,” and his studio — he says he is an artist — contains a number of heirlooms. One thing which he takes

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

particular pride in is a Continental uniform, complete in every detail, with flintlock and powder horn. He was showing this to a young lady the other day. "My great-grandfather wore this suit when he gave his life to his country during the brave days of the Revolution!" he said. The young lady inspected the uniform carefully, but could find neither bullet hole nor sabre cut. She turned to him with a charming smile. "Oh! was the poor old gentleman drowned?" she asked.

HIS DESTRUCTION

A NERVOUS man on his lonely homeward way heard the echoing of footsteps behind him, and dim visions of hold-up men and garroters coursed through his brain. The faster he walked the more the man behind increased his speed, and although the nervous one took the most roundabout and devious course he could devise, still his tracker followed. At last he turned into a churchyard. "If he follows me here," he decided, "there can be no doubt about his intentions." The man behind did follow, and quivering with heat and rage, the nervous one turned and confronted him. "What do you want?" he demanded. "Why are you following me?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Do you always go home like this," asked the stranger, "or are you giving yourself a treat to-night? I am going up to Mr. Brown's and the porter at the station told me to follow you, as you lived next door. Excuse my asking, but are you going home at all to-night?"

THE ANGLE

WHISTLER once undertook to get a fellow painter's work into the autumn salon. He succeeded and the picture was hung. But the painter, going to see his masterpiece with Whistler on varnishing day, uttered a terrible oath when he beheld it. "Good gracious," he groaned, "you're exhibiting my picture upside down."

"Hush," said Whistler, "the committee refused it the other way."

ARRANGEMENTS

HE EVIDENTLY had the making of a hero in him, but he was discovered helpless, floundering in a water-trough, and had it not been for the timely advent of a policeman he assuredly would have been drowned. When the policeman seized him by the slack of his trousers and his coat collar, however, and at-

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

tempted to lift him from the trough, he resisted vigorously. "Shay, offisher," he sputtered, "you save the women an' children; I can look after myself."

BINDING

HE WAS a raw recruit, just enrolled in a crack cavalry regiment and paying his first visit to the riding school. "'Ere's yer 'orse," cried the instructor. The recruit advanced, took the bridle gingerly, and examined his mount with great care.

"What's it got this strap round it for?" he said, pointing to the girth.

"Well," explained the instructor, "you see, all our 'orses 'ave a keen sense of 'umour, an' as they sometimes 'ave sudden fits of laughter when they see the recruits, we put them bands round 'em to keep 'em from bustin' their sides!"

DECLINING A MANUSCRIPT

THIS is how the editor of a paper in China declines a manuscript: "Illustrious brother of the sun and moon! Look upon the slave who rolls at thy feet, who kisses the earth before thee, and demands of thy charity permission to speak and live. We have read the manuscript with

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

delight. By the bones of our ancestors we swear that never before have we encountered such a masterpiece. Should we print it, his majesty the emperor would order us to take it as a criterion and never again print anything which was not equal to it. As that would not be possible before 10,000 years, all tremblingly we return the manuscript and beg thee 10,000 pardons. See — my head is at thy feet, and I am the slave of thy servant.”

AN AMENDMENT

AN OLD miser in Athens, Georgia, hated to part with money, and to the physician who was just bringing him around from a long illness he said one day: “Ah, Doctor, we have known each other such a long time, I don’t intend to insult you by settling your account in cash; but I have put you down for a handsome legacy in my will.”

The doctor looked thoughtful. “Allow me,” he said, “to look at that prescription again. I wish to make a slight alteration in it.”

DESPERATE MEASURES

CAPTAIN JOHN E. PILLSBURY, the navy board’s new member, said the other day in Washington of a recruit who could not shoot:

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"The sergeant tried the fellow first at 500 yards, and he failed to come within a mile of the target. Then he tried at 300 yards, then at 200, then at 100, and his last shot was worse, if possible, than his first. The sergeant looked at him disgustedly, got very angry, and walking up close to him, shouted in his face: "Attention! Fix bayonet! Charge the target! It's your only chance."

HIS FEELINGS

A NEW YORKER recently returned from England, where he saw much of the tinsel and tin armour pageantry by which various anniversaries have been celebrated at Oxford and elsewhere, tells this: A Roman in costume approached a fellow tinned character and asked; "Are you Appius Claudius?"

"No," responded the other most dejectedly, "I'm not 'appy as Claudius; I'm un'appy as 'ell."

LIMITED

A SMALL boy of a thoughtful turn of mind, sitting at his mother's feet one day, looked up and said suddenly:

"Mother, do liars ever go to heaven?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

X "Why, no, dear," replied the mother in some surprise, "certainly not."

There was quite a pause.

Finally the boy said quietly:

✓ "Well, it must be mighty lonesome up there with only God and George Washington."

THE STOOL WAS ALL RIGHT

DOWN on a Southern plantation the dairy hands were accustomed to do the milking squatting down in a primitive fashion, until the owner introduced milking-stools with other improvements. But the initial experiment with the innovation was not exactly a success. The darky who first sallied forth with the stool returned bruised and battered and with an empty pail. "I done my best, sah," he explained. ✓ "Dat stool looked all right to me, but de blamed cow she won't sit on it!"

ORDER

✓ WHEN the Civil War was just beginning, the commander of a volunteer military company reported to General Lee in great agitation that it would require some time for the

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

old flintlock guns of his company to be changed and fitted for percussion caps. "The only way I can see," replied General Lee, "is to telegraph to Mr. Lincoln to have the war put off for three weeks."

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL MOMENT

TWO Jews were travelling through the West in a stagecoach, when, without any warning, they were suddenly held up by highwaymen who appeared about fifty feet in front of the horses.

One of the Jews sensed the situation instantly. Turning to his friend, as he pulled a roll of bills out of his pocket, he said:

"Here, lkey, is dot fifty dollars I owe you."

OVERLOOKED

SPEAKING of a sense of humour, one of our great important requisites is an imagination that shall be able to see two things at once. A man who has no sense of humour only sees one thing at a time. For instance, there was a certain judge sitting in a court room, with two lawyers, and one of the lawyers got mad at the other over an argument and suddenly turning upon him said:

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Of all the unmitigated, consummate asses that ever lived, you are the absolute limit!"

And the judge, rapping heavily with his gavel, cried:

"Gentlemen, you forget that I am present."

RESPONSIBILITY

A LADY was visiting a friend who had a large family of children. On the way she passed two of the girls, who were playing. When she entered the house, there was another little girl taking care of the smallest one in the family. She was one of those little girls that we sometimes see in large families even to-day.

"Why are you not out with your sisters having a good time?" said the visitor.

The little girl smiled dolefully:

"You see," she said, "it's this way: Mother trusts me so dreadfully that I can't have much fun."

POLITE

A LITTLE girl who had just returned from her summer vacation was taken to church for the first time in several weeks. On the way out she turned to her mother and said:

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Mama, I hope you will excuse me for fidgeting in church; but you know I am not in training."

IT WAS ALL RIGHT

A KENTUCKY colonel visited a certain country town, accompanied by his servant. The proprietor of the hotel approached the servant and said:

"Unfortunately, we have no screens in the house yet, and I am afraid that your master will feel the mosquitoes to-night. You had better look out for him."

"Don't worry about the old man," said the servant. "The first part of the night he will be so drunk that he won't notice them, and the last part of the night they will be too drunk to bother him."

HE TOOK IT

A MAN was brought before the Leeds magistrates on a charge of theft. He had no one to defend him, so the judge requested a smart young lawyer to take him into an ante-room and give him the best advice he could. Five minutes later the lawyer, to the surprise of the judge, reappeared in court alone.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Where's the prisoner?" queried the magistrate.

"You told me to give him the best advice I could, your worship, and ——"

"Of course I did."

"Well, I did so; and the culprit is gone."

HE EXPLAINED

A VERY mild north of England vicar had for some time been displeased with the quality of the milk served him. At length he determined to remonstrate with his milkman for supplying such weak stuff. He began mildly:

"I've been wanting to see you in regard to the quality of milk with which you are serving me."

"Yes, sir," uneasily answered the tradesman.

"I only wanted to say," continued the minister, "that I use the milk for dietary purposes exclusively, and not for christening."

DOING HIMSELF PROUD

A MEMBER of the school board of Cleveland, Ohio, was once addressing a class in the poorer quarter of the city, when he touched upon the beauties of friendship.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Friendship, boys and girls," said he, "is a thing to be cultivated and practised by all of us. Read and ponder the stories of the great friendships of sacred and profane history. Take them for your models — David and Jonathan, Damon and Pythias, and Scylla and Charybdis."

UNPREJUDICED

A WELL-KNOWN French actor became involved in a discussion with an American, grew heated, drew his card from his pocket, threw it on the table with a tragic air, and stalked out. The American regarded the card for some moments, then took out his fountain pen, wrote "admit bearer" above the engraved line, and went off to the theatre.

SIMILITUDE

THE superintendent of a lunatic asylum was strolling round the grounds a few weeks after his appointment, when one of the inmates came up to him and, touching his hat, exclaimed: "We all like you better than the last one, sir."

"Thank you," said the new official, pleasantly. "And may I ask why?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Well, sir," replied the lunatic, "you see you are more like one of us!"

NOT GUILTY

IN NORTH CAROLINA a white man was arraigned for stealing chickens from a negro. The jury was composed of seven white men and five negroes, and one of the latter was made foreman. They came into court and the clerk demanded: "Have you agreed upon a verdict?"

"Yes, sah."

"What is it?"

"De jury am gone Democratic, sah, and de prisoner am not guilty."

EVIDENCE

AN AUCTION was announced of the library and household effects of a man who had once entertained in a lavish way, and among the persons who went to the sale were many who had enjoyed the fallen family's hospitality. When a set of after-dinner cups was put up one woman said: "There are only five of those, not six."

The auctioneer consulted his catalogue and

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Does an effect ever go before a cause?"

"Yes."

"Give me an instance."

"A barrow wheeled by a man."

The doctor hastily sat down and proposed no more questions.

TIME ENOUGH

MR. A. LOW, general attorney for the Rock Island Railroad, rarely talks any more than is necessary. As a rule, even reserved men will loosen up a little and talk while on a railroad train. But not so Mr. Low. He talks no more on a train than anywhere else. Mr. Low and David Mulvane once made a trip together to Denver. Some days later Dave was in a company of friends and the talk turned to books. "Dave," said one of them, "did you ever read 'David Harum?'"

"Yes," replied Mulvane. "I read it recently in a pause in the conversation on a trip which I took to Denver with Mr. Low."

A DERELICT

AT A banquet in New York, Canon Henson, describing the old dress of English bishops, said: "The Bishop of Bath and Wells had been

replied: "Thank you; you are right," and proceeded with the sale.

Then the woman whispered to the one next to her: "I knew I was right, because my husband dropped one of that set the last time we dined there."

RATHER HAD HIM

REV. DR. RITCHIE of Edinburgh, though a very clever man, once met his match. When examining a student as to the classes he attended, he said: "I understand you attend the class for mathematics?"

"Yes."

"How many sides has a circle?"

"Two," said the student.

"Indeed! What are they?"

What a laugh in the court the student's answer produced when he said promptly: "An inside and an outside."

The doctor next inquired: "And you attend the moral philosophy class, also?"

"Yes."

"Well, you doubtless heard lectures on various subjects. Did you ever hear one on cause and effect?"

"Yes."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

visiting Scarborough. On the way to the train he lost his reckoning and stopped a boy. 'I say, my lad, how far is it to the station?' he asked. 'About a mile straight ahead,' said the boy. Then, staring at the bishop's knee breeches and silk stockings, he added, 'What's up? Somebody swipe your bike?'"

GEORGA WASHINGTON

GEORGA Washingdone vas a vera gooda man. Hees fadda he kepa bigga place in Washingdone Street. He hada a grata bigga lot planta wees cherra, peacha, pluma, chesnutta, peanutta, an' banan trees. He sella to mena keepa de stands. Gooda mana to Italia mana vas Georga Washingdone. He hata de Irish. Kicka dem way like dees.

One tay wen Georga, hees son, vos deesa high, like de hoppa grass, he takes hees litta hatchet an' he beginna to fool round de place. He vas vera fresh, vas litta Georga. Poota soon he cutta downa de cherra tree lika dees. Dat spoil de cherra cropa for de season. Den he goa around try killa de banan an' de peanutta.

Poota soon Georga's fadda coma rounda quicka lika dees. Den he lifta uppa hees fista, looka

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

lika big bunch a banan, an' he vas just goin' to giva litta Georga de smaka de snoota if he tola lie. Hees eyes blaza lika dees.

Litta Georga he say in hees minda: , "I gitta puncha, annyhow, so I tella de square thing." So he holda up hees litta hands lika dees, an' he calla "Tima!"

Den he says, "Fadda, I cutta de cherra tree weesa mia own litta hatchet!"

Hees fadda he say, "Coma to de barn weesa me, litta Georga, I wanta speeka weesa you!"

Den hees fadda cutta big club an' he spitta hees hands lika dees.

Litta Georga say, "Fadda, I could notta tella de lie because I know you caughta me deda to rights."

Den de olda man he smila lika dees, an' he tooka litta Georga righta down to Wall Street an' made him a president of de United States.

IN THE COLD GRAY DAWN

DOWN in Macon on a quiet spring afternoon, when everybody was drowsing and the street was deserted, a man came along selling wood, his sonorous voice, "Wood for sale," being the only thing that disturbed the silence.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

In one of the houses, just back of the window, there was a parrot, and when the man came by that house with his cry the parrot replied: "Right in here; right in here." The man turned in, in obedience to the order, and dumped a load of wood down cellar in the rear. Then he rang the bell and the head of the household came down.

"Two dollars, please."

"For what?"

"You ordered a load of wood."

"No I didn't."

Then the head of the household looked up and saw the parrot. "It's that d — n parrot," he said. In a rage he grabbed the bird out of the cage, swung it rapidly round by the neck, and running out in the backyard threw it precipitately on the ash pile.

About fifteen hours later, quite early in the morning, the parrot raised its head feebly. Then it slowly turned over, scratched one leg and then the other, preened its feathers a little, and tried to stand up, and doing so, saw a dead cat on the other side of the ash heap.

The parrot pondered a moment, and finally leaning over said: "My friend, what did *you* order?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

HARD WORK

A COMMERCIAL traveller driving from town to town through the pine woods of Florida saw a drove of emaciated razorback hogs rushing wildly from tree to tree. He halted at the palings of a "cracker's" home, and asked a woman in a sunbonnet what was the matter with the swine.

"Well, you see," the woman explained, "my old man is deaf and dumb, and when he wanted to call the hogs he learned them to come when he tapped on one of the trees. It worked all right when they first got learned, but now them woodpeckers is makin' the poor things run their legs off."

A CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

MARY was a buxom country lass, and her father was an upright deacon in a Connecticut village. Mary's plan of joining the boys and girls in a nutting party was frustrated by the unexpected arrival of a number of "brethren" on their way to conference, and Mary had to stay at home and get dinner for her father's clerical guests. Her already ruffled temper was increased by the reverend visitors themselves, who

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

sat about the stove and in the way. One of the good ministers noticed the wrathful impatience, and, desiring to rebuke the sinful manifestations, said, sternly: "Mary, what do you think will be your occupation in hell."

"Pretty much the same as it is on earth," she replied: "cooking for ministers."

A MATTER OF PRIDE

HARRY CARR, of Broadway, New York, recently made a trip to Reno, and owing to a sudden turn of circumstances lingered there until he was hungry. At length, Mr. Carr, having detached a dollar from a protesting friend, entered a Reno restaurant.

"Sage hen," said the waiter, not as one offering a query, but as a person stating a fact.

"What's sage hen?" asked Mr. Carr. The waiter said it was a bird, native to the desert country.

"Has it got wings?" asked Mr. Carr. The waiter said it had.

"Then," said Mr. Carr, decisively, "I don't want no sage hen. I won't eat nothing that has wings — and yet stays in Nevada."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

NOT A PREFERENCE

THE "cub" reporter had gone with the dramatic critic to see his first rehearsal, and, after gazing at Miss Brown for nearly a whole act, said timidly to the older man: "I wonder whether any girl could be as innocent as Miss Brown looks."

"You might ask her," the older man replied. The "cub" said he'd rather not; he didn't want to ask so leading a question, but the other and more cynical representative of the press took him back on the stage to see the young lady. The "cub" gathered his nerves and asked: "Miss Brown could — er — any girl be as innocent as you look?"

"Y-e-s, I think she could, but — she wouldn't want to be."

GOING HIM ONE BETTER

THE head of a manufacturing concern who built up his business from nothing but his own dogged and persistent toil, and who has never felt that he could spare time for a vacation, not long ago, however, decided that he was getting along in years, and that he was entitled to a rest. Calling his son into the library, he

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

said: "Tom, I've worked pretty hard for quite a while now, and have done very well, so I have decided to retire and turn the business over to you. What do you say?" The young man pondered the situation gravely. Then a bright idea seemed to strike him.

"I say, dad," he suggested, "how would it be for you to work a few years longer and then the two of us retire together?"

ON THE VERGE

IN THE old days, when oral examinations were still the thing, an examining board was pommelling an applicant with questions from Blackstone, Kent, and other legal lights.

"I didn't study anything about these fellows," complained the applicant.

"What did you study?" asked one of the judges.

"I studied the statutes of the state," he replied. "I studied them hard. Ask me a question about them and I'll show you. That is where I got my legal knowledge."

"My young friend," said one austere judge on the examining board, "you would better be very careful, for some day the legislature might meet and repeal everything you know."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

SYNTHESIS

A WELL-KNOWN clergyman of Boston was once talking with some friends with reference to the desirability of chronological coherence in ideas, in the form of written statement, when he observed that there are times when this method becomes a trifle too suggestive.

"For instance," said the speaker, "I once heard a minister in New Hampshire make his usual Sunday morning announcements as follows: 'The funeral of the late and much-lamented sexton takes place on Wednesday afternoon at three o'clock. Thanksgiving services will be held in this chapel on Thursday morning at eleven o'clock.'"

I SAY, mama," asked little Tommy, "do fairy tales always begin with 'Once upon a time?'"

"No, dear, not always," replied mama; "they sometimes begin with 'My love, I have been detained at the office again to-night.'"

A PROPER QUESTION!

ONE Sunday morning, Mr. Moody, the revivalist, entered a Chicago drug-store, distributing tracts. At the back of the store

sat an elderly and distinguished citizen reading a morning newspaper. Mr. Moody approached this gentleman and threw one of the temperance tracts upon the paper before him. The old gentleman glanced at the tract, and then looking up benignantly at Moody, asked: "Are you a reformed drunkard?"

"No, sir, I am not!" cried Moody, drawing back indignantly.

"Then why don't you reform?" quietly asked the gentleman.

DEAR little Maudie awoke about two o'clock the other morning and asked mama to tell her a fairy tale.

"It's too late, darling," mama replied. "Daddy will be in shortly, and he'll tell us both one."

DARLING," he said, "what would you do if I should die? Tell me."

"Please don't suggest such a thing," said his wife. "I can't bear the thought of a step-father for our little boy."

IT WAS a dark night. A man was riding a bicycle with no lamp. He came to a cross road, and did not know which way to turn. He

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

felt in his pocket for a match. He found but one. Climbing to the top of the pole, he lit the match carefully, and in the ensuing glimmer read: "Wt Paint."

NO NEWS

A 'CUB' reporter on an up-state paper was sent out by the city editor to get up a story on the marriage of a young society girl and a man well known in the city. The "cub" was gone about an hour and then returned and went aimlessly over to his desk, by which he sat down. Shortly afterward the city editor noticed his presence and his evident idleness.

"Here, kid!" shouted the superior, "why aren't you at work on that wedding?"

"Nothin' doing," replied the boy.

"Nothing doing? What do you mean? Didn't the wedding take place?"

"Nope; the bridegroom never showed up, so there ain't nothin' to write."

A DISPUTED STATEMENT

A RECEPTION was given by the Medical Club in Philadelphia in honour of Sir J. Under Brunton, a noted English physician, and

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

in course of the evening he was engaged in a discussion of nervous ill temper. After he had described the beneficial effects of various drugs upon nervous ill tempers, he said: "I remember a middle-aged woman of most nervous disposition who told me with tears in her eyes how she had once said to her husband: 'John, I know I am cross at times. I know that you find me unkind often. Sometimes, perhaps, you think I do not love you. But, John, remember, when such unhappy thoughts assail you, that if I had my life to live over again, I'd marry you just the same.'

"'I'm not so sure of that,' John replied, shortly."

DESCENT

MR. DICKSON, a coloured barber in a New England town, was shaving one of his customers one evening, when the following conversation occurred respecting Mr. Dickson's connection with the coloured church in the place.

"I believe you are a member of the church in Elm Street," said the customer.

"No, sah; not at all."

"Why, are you a member of the African church?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Not dis year, sah," said Mr. Dickson. "It was jus' like dis: I jined dat ar church in good faith; I gib \$10 to de preachin' uv de gospel, an de people call me 'Brudder Dickson.' De second year I only gib \$5, an' de church people call me 'Mr. Dickson.' Well, sah, de third year I gibs nothin' to de preachin' an' after dat dey jes call me ol' nigger Dickson, and I quit 'em."

OPTIMISM

AFTER the Ways and Means Committee had been compelled to leave its old quarters and go over to a new House of Representatives office building, some of his friends were sympathizing with Champ Clark.

"It might have been worse, Champ," they said. "Cheer up. Pretty soon they will have the electric cars running in the subway, and then you can ride over."

"Yes," replied Clark. "It might have been worse. Reminds me of an Irishman I knew down in St. Louis who had both his legs cut off by a railroad train.

"'It might have been worse, Mike,' they said.

"'Sure,' Mike replied; 'suppose I had been a chorus girl.'"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

FAST COIN

MANY years ago, in consequence of a commercial panic, there was a severe run on a bank in South Wales, and the small farmers jostled each other in crowds to draw out their money. Things were rapidly going from bad to worse, when the bank manager, in a fit of desperation, suddenly bethought him of an expedient. By his directions a clerk, having heated some sovereigns in a frying pan, paid them over the counter to an anxious applicant.

"Why, they're quite hot!" said the latter, as he took them up.

"Of course," was the reply; "what else could you expect? They're only just out of the mould. We are coining them by hundreds as fast as we can."

"Coining them!" thought the simple agriculturists; "then there is no fear of the money running short!" With this their confidence revived, the panic abated, and the bank was enabled to weather the storm.

FROM HIS STANDPOINT

A WAY back, when herds of buffalo grazed along the foothills of the western mountains, two hardy prospectors fell in with a bull

bison that seemed to have been separated from his kind and run amuck. One of the prospectors took to the branches of a tree and the other dived into a cave. The buffalo bellowed at the entrance of the cavern and then turned toward the tree. Out came the man from the cave and the buffalo took after him again. The man made another dive for the hole. After this had been repeated several times, the man in the tree called to his comrade, who was trembling at the mouth of the cavern.

"Stay in the cave, you idiot!"

"You don't know nothing about this hole," bawled the other. "There's a bear in it!"

F A M E

A YOUNG man returned to the country village where he was born, after having successfully worked his way up by direct primary ballot to a nomination for a state office.

"I suppose the people here, Thomas, have heard of the honour that has been conferred on me?" he inquired of one of his old friends.

"Yes, they have," was the gratifying reply.

"And what," said the man of fame eagerly: "what do they say about it, Thomas?"

"They don't say anything," replied Thomas.
"They just laugh." _____

ONLY ONE INSTANCE

JUSTIN McCARTHY used to tell a story of Henry Ward Beecher. Mr. Beecher entered Plymouth Church one Sunday and found several letters awaiting him. He opened one and found it contained the single word "Fool." Quietly and with becoming seriousness he announced to the congregation the fact in these words:

"I have known many an instance of a man writing a letter and forgetting to sign his name, but this is the only instance I have ever known of a man signing his name and forgetting to write the letter." _____

BARRED OUT

AN ENGLISH merchant was a daily customer in a well-known restaurant, and always honoured the waiter in a most generous fashion, as he liked him for his attentiveness.

One day, to his surprise, another waiter served him.

"The other waiter is here," said the new one.
"But he can't serve you."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Why not?" queried the astonished diner.

"Well, you see, sir," was the reply, "we played cards the other evening, and after he had lost all his money, I had the good fortune to win *you*."

HIS PRICE

DEPARTMENT Stores Manager: The clerk in the butter department says he's not going to lie about our butter any more.

The Boss: What salary does he get?

Manager: Eight dollars a week.

\ The Boss: Give him nine.

IS MRS. WISE at home?" inquired Mrs. Chatters, standing in the shadow of the doorway.

"I don't know, ma'am," replied the servant; "I can't tell till I git a better look at ye. If ye've a wart on the side o' yer nose, ma'am, she ain't."

THE FAITHFUL PIGEON

EVERYBODY knows that the quality of reliability is the most valuable asset that a man can have; and how rare it is! The man who

sticks to his job under all circumstances is the man who makes the nation. An illustration of this fact lies in the story that was told about a man who once owned a carrier pigeon — one of those pigeons who, no matter where he went, could always be relied upon to come back.

This gentleman was talking one day with a friend of his and he said:

“What do you suppose happened to that pigeon of mine? I was talking with a fellow the other day about him and made the remark that this pigeon always came back no matter where he went, and he said that he did not believe it. He said that he could take that pigeon with him down to Philadelphia and he would be willing to bet, me one hundred dollars that the pigeon would not come back inside of twenty-four hours. I told him that I would take him up. Well, sir, he took that pigeon down to Philadelphia, and what do you suppose he did?”

“I can’t imagine,” said the friend. “Didn’t he let him loose in Philadelphia?”

“Oh, yes, he let him loose, but before he let him loose he clipped the pigeon’s wings.”

“Well that was too bad,” said the friend. “Then you lost your bet and the pigeon didn’t come back?”

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

The man smiled. "Oh, yes, the pigeon came back and I won my bet."

"He came back?" said the friend.

"Sure," said the man. "He came back, but he had awful sore feet."

NEW YORK AND PHILADELPHIA

THE difference between the ways of New York and Philadelphia is illustrated by the following anecdote, which may be more or less fanciful, but which at least stands for a certain principle of contrast.

A young lady stenographer, who had been born and brought up in the Metropolis, in some unaccountable manner strayed down to Philadelphia and succeeded in obtaining a position with a respectable firm there, the head of which was a very respectable gentleman of Quaker ancestry. On the first morning of her employment the head of the firm found the young lady waiting for him upon his arrival in the office. She said:

"Shall I open the mail, sir?"

"If you will."

"Do you prefer to have the letters taken out of the envelopes and placed together?"

"It might be a good idea."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

There was a slight pause, then the young lady said: "Well, kiss me and we will get to work."

GUILTY

GEORGE BARRY MALLON, for many years city editor of the New York *Sun*, tells the following story about a young man who started out in life as a reporter and whose first assignment was given to him by the Providence *Journal*. He was sent to interview the priest of the Roman Catholic Church one morning and was told by the sacristan at the door that the Reverend Father was in the rear of the church receiving confessions, but that he might go back and wait until he had finished.

The young reporter entered the church and went down the aisle until he came to the confessional box. He put his face up to the aperture in the box and discovering that the Reverend Father was inside said:

"I beg your pardon, I should like to see you for a few moments. I am a reporter for the Providence *Journal*."

"In just a moment," came the soft reply from within.

The young man waited. Finally the Rever-

end Father emerged from the rear of the confessional box, and, walking over to him, put his hand on the reporter's shoulder.

"Young man," he said, "I have listened to confessions for the past thirty years, but your's is the worst one I have ever heard."

NO NEWS

THE following story in some form has been perpetuated from time immemorial. It has been traced back to India and during the period of the earlier French literature was one of the many folklore tales. In modern form it has been repeated by after-dinner speakers and upon phonographs, only changed slightly to give it local colour:

A wealthy man was ordered by his physician to go to the country to get a much-needed rest, and while away to receive no communication from home. He returned from his vacation very much refreshed in spirit and body and very anxious for some news from home. He was met at the station by his old coloured servant, and the following conversation took place.

He said: "Well, Henry, how is everything about the place? Has anything happened since I went away?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"No, sah. Nothing happened, sah. Everything is just about the same."

"Well, Henry, tell me any little thing, no matter how slight."

"No, sah. Nothing happened, sah, 'ceptin' one little thing. Since you been away youah dog died."

"Oh! My dog died! What killed the dog?"

"Well, sah, he died from eatin' burnt hoss-flesh."

"Burnt horse-flesh! Where did he get the burnt horse-flesh?"

"Well, sah, you see youah barn burnt down and the dog got in dar and eat up some of de burnt hoss-flesh, and dats what killed the dog."

"Oh, my barn burnt down! Well, how did the barn get on fire?"

"Well, sah, you see the sparks from de house they blew over, and fell on de roof of de barn and de barn caught fire and some of de hosses was burned. De dog got in dar and eat the burnt hoss-flesh, and dat's what killed de dog."

"Sparks from the house! Did the house burn too?"

"Yes, sah, dat's completely destroyed."

"How did the house get on fire?"

"Well, sah, you see de candles was burnin'

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

and de curtains took fire and burnt down de house, de sparks flew over and —— ”

“Candles in my house, where I burn nothing but gas and electricity! Where did the candles come from?”

“De candles was burnin’ around de coffin, sah.”

“Coffin! Who’s dead?”

“Oh, yes, sah. Dat’s another little thing I forgot to tell you about. Your mother-in-law, sah. She’s dead all right. You needn’t worry about dat.”

“My mother-in-law dead! What killed her?”

“Well, sah, dey ain’t quite sarten, but around de neighbourhood dey say dat she died from the shock of your wife runnin’ away with de shofer; but outside of dat, sah, there aint no news.”

A STORY WITH A MORAL

A VISITOR to a Sunday school was asked to address a few remarks to the children. He took the familiar theme of the children who mocked Elisha on his journey to Bethel — how the youngsters taunted the poor old prophet and how they were punished when two she-bears came out of the wild and ate forty-and-two of them.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"And now, children," said he, wishing to learn if his talk had produced any moral effect, "what does this story show?"

"Please, sir," came from a little girl well down in the front, "it shows how many children two she-bears can hold."

ONE WAY OF LOOKING AT IT

A MAN who stuttered very badly went to a specialist, and after ten difficult lessons learned to say quite distinctly, "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." His friends congratulated him upon his splendid achievement.

"Yes," said the man, doubtfully, "but it's s-s-such a d-d-deucedly d-d-difficult rem-mark to w-work into an ordin-n-nary c-c-convers-s-sation, y' know."

A JUST CRITICISM

A MAN, driven home on a very wet night, wished to give the car-driver something to keep the cold out. Finding nothing at hand but a liquor stand with its tiny glasses, he filled up one and handed it to John, remarking: "You'll think none the worse of this because it was made by the holy monks."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"God bless the holy monks!" exclaimed the driver as he drained the glass; "it's themselves that can make good liquor, but the man who blew that glass was very short of breath."

TRUE GALLANTRY

THE car-driver can be complimentary when it seems to suit his purpose. An old lady was getting into a car one day in Dublin, and finding it a somewhat difficult job, she turned to the driver with the request, "Help me in, my good man, for I'm very old."

"Begorra, ma'am," was Pat's gallant reply, "no matter what age you are you don't look it."

A REAL DEFENDER

A TOURIST in Ireland, driving along a country road, drew the jarvey's attention to a miserable looking tatterdemalion by the roadside, and remarked: "What a shocking thing it is to see a man in such rags and misery."

"Begorra, then, yer honour," replied the driver with the characteristically Irish desire to put a good face on everything, "that's not from poverty at all, at all. The truth is that the man's so

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

ticklesome that sorra a tailor in the counthry can attempt to take his measure."

ETIQUETTE

THE students at Oxford stand much upon punctilio in the matter of making acquaintance; insomuch that one will not hold the least intercourse with another, unless the proper formula of introduction has been gone through.

It is told, as a quiz upon them for this peculiarity, that a young gentleman who had recently entered one of the colleges, happening to be seized with cramp while bathing in the Isis, and being on the point of sinking, probably to rise no more, a youth of older standing, who leaned over a bridge near the scene, thus soliloquized: "Good God! what a pity I was not introduced to that freshman — perhaps I might have saved him."

PROLONGATION

AN ELDER, while baptising converts at a revival meeting, advanced with a wiry, sharp-eyed old chap into the water. He asked the usual question, whether there was any reason why the ordinance of baptism should not be administered.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

After a pause, a tall, powerful-looking man, who was looking quietly on, remarked: "Elder, I don't want to interfere in your business, but I want to say that this is an old sinner you have got hold of, and that one dip won't do him any good; you'll have to anchor him out in deep water overnight."

HOW BARNUM EMPTIED HIS SHOW

P T. BARNUM once succeeded in emptying his big show at a time when it was densely crowded, and thousands were waiting outside to obtain admission.

With his deep knowledge of the public, he realized that a start was all that was needed to effect his purpose, but how to manage that was the rub. At length a bright idea occurred to him. Painting up in large letters on a piece of calico — "This way for the Egress," he hung it up at a convenient angle of his show, which was emptied in ten minutes.

HE APPROVED

GENERAL HORACE PORTER said once at a dinner:

"I remember a lesson in brevity I received in a barber's shop. An Irishman came in, and

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

the unsteady gait with which he approached the chair showed that he had been imbibing of the produce of the still run by North Carolina moonshiners. He wanted his hair cut, and while the barber was getting him ready, went off into a drunken sleep. His head kept bobbing from one side to the other, and at length the barber, in making a snip, cut off the lower part of his ear. The barber jumped about and howled, a crowd of neighbours rushed in.

"Finally the demonstration became so great that it began to attract the attention of the man in the chair, and he opened one eye and said, 'Wh-wh-at's the matter wid yez?'

"'Good Lord!'" said the barber, 'I've cut off the whole lower part of your ear.'

"'Have yez? Ah, thin, go on wid yer bizness — it was too long, anyhow!'"

MULE ARTILLERY

By John Phoenix

[G. H. Darby, who wrote under the name of John Phoenix, was prominent at one time as one of our leading American humourists. He was born in 1823 and died in 1861.]

OUT in a certain western fort, some time ago, the major conceived the idea that artillery might be used effectively in fighting with the

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

Indians by dispensing with gun carriages and fastening the cannon upon the backs of mules. So he explained his views to the commandant, and it was determined to try the experiment.

A howitzer was selected and strapped upon an ambulance mule, with the muzzle pointed toward the tail. When they had secured the gun, and loaded it with ball cartridge, they led that calm and steadfast mule out on the bluff, and set up a target in the middle of the river to practise at.

The rear of the mule was turned toward the target, and he was backed gently up to the edge of the bluff. The officers stood round in a semi-circle, while the major went up and inserted a time fuse in the touch hole of the howitzer. When the fuse was ready, the major lit it and retired.

In a minute or two the hitherto unruffled mule heard the fizzing back there on his neck, and it made him uneasy. He reached his head around to ascertain what was going on, and the howitzer began to sweep around the horizon. The mule at last became excited and his curiosity became more and more intense, and in a second or two he was standing with his four legs in a bunch, making six revolutions a minute, and the howitzer threatening sudden death to every man within

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

half a mile. The commandant was observed to climb suddenly up a tree; the lieutenants were seen sliding over the bluff into the river, as if they didn't care at all about the price of uniforms; the adjutant made good time toward the fort; the sergeant began to throw up breastworks with his bayonet, and the major rolled over on the ground and groaned. In two or three minutes there was a puff of smoke, a dull thud, and the mule — Oh, where was he? A solitary mule might have been seen turning somersaults over the bluff, and land finally, with his howitzer, at the bottom of the river, while the ball went off toward the fort, hit the chimney of the major's quarters, and rattled the adobe bricks down into the parlour, frightening the major's wife into convulsions. They do not allude to it now, and no report of the results of the experiment was ever sent to the War Department.

WISE FRANKLIN

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN had the true spirit of New England thrift, besides other qualities. When a child he found the long graces used by his father before and after meals very tedious. One day after the winter's pro-

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

visions had been salted, "I think, father," said Benjamin, "if you were to say grace over the whole cask once for all, it would be a great saving of time."

PEDIGREE OF FOOLS

THEY say Lost-Time married Ignorance and had a son called I-Thought, who married Youth, and had the following children: I-Didn't-Know, I-Didn't-Think, Who-Would-Have-Expected.

Who-Would-Have-Expected married Heedlessness, and had four children: It's-All-Right, To-morrow-Will-Do, There's-Plenty-of-Time, and Next-Opportunity.

There's-Plenty-of-Time married I-Didn't-Think and for family: I-Forgot, I-Know-All-About-It, Nobody-Can-Deceive-Me.

I-Know-All-About-It espoused Vanity and begat Pleasure, who, marrying That's-Not-Likely, became father to Let-Us-Enjoy-Ourselves and Bad-Luck.

Bad-Luck took to wife Little-Sense, and had a very large family, among whom were This-Will-Do, What-Business-Is-It-Of-Theirs, It-Seems-To-Me, It's-Not-Possible.

Pleasure was widowed, and, marrying again,

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

espoused Folly. Consuming their inheritance, they said one to the other: "Have patience, let us spend our capital and enjoy ourselves this year, for God will provide for the next." But Deception took them to prison, and Poverty to the workhouse, where they died.

Strange obsequies were performed at their funeral, at which were present the five Senses, Intellect, Memory, and Will, although in a pitiful condition. Repentance, who came somewhat late, found no seat, and had to stand the whole time, while Consolation and Contentment were represented by Desolation and Melancholy, daughters of Memory.

Despair, grandchild of the deceased, went about begging for several days, in which he could only collect six maravedies, with which he bought a rope and hanged himself from a turret, which is the end of the family of Fools.

HE LAUGHED LAST

A YOUNG man was sitting in the Grand Central Depot the other day, holding a baby in his arms, when the child began to cry so lustily as to attract the attention of every one around him. By and by a waiting passenger

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

walked over to him with a smile of pity on his face and said:

"A woman gave you that baby to hold while she went to see about her baggage, didn't she?"

"Yes."

"Ha! ha! ha! I tumbled to the fact as soon as I saw you. You expect her back, I suppose?"

"Of course."

"Ha! ha! ha! This is rich! Looking for her every minute, aren't you?"

"Yes, and I think she'll come back."

"Well this makes me laugh — ha! ha! ha! I had a woman play that same trick on me in a Chicago depot once, but no one ever will again. Young man, you've been played on for a hayseed. I would advise you to turn that baby over to a policeman and get out of here before some newspaper reporter gets hold of you."

"Oh, she'll come back, she'll come back."

"She will eh? The joke grows richer and richer. Now what makes you think she'll come back?"

"Because she's my wife and this is our baby."

A LIVE BOOK AGENT

A PHILADELPHIA book agent canvassed James Watson, a rich and close man living at Elizabeth, until he bought a book — the

“Early Christian Martyrs.” Mr. Watson didn’t want the book, but he bought it to get rid of the agent; then taking it under his arm he started for the train which takes him to his New York office.

The canvasser took note that the family was interested in that class of literature and made a mental resolution to see Mrs. Watson during the day, Mr. W. having incautiously dropped the remark that his wife generally did the book buying of the family.

By and by the book agent called, went in and persuaded the wife to buy another copy, she being ignorant of the fact that her husband had bought the same book in the morning. When Mr. Watson came back from New York at night, Mrs. Watson showed him the book.

“I don’t want to see it,” said Mr. Watson, frowning terribly.

“Why, husband?” asked the wife.

“Because that rascally book agent sold me the same book this morning. Now we’ve got two copies of the same book—two copies of the ‘Early Christian Martyrs,’ and ——”

“But, husband, we can ——”

“No, we can’t either,” interrupted Mr. Watson. “The man is off on the train before this. Confound it! I could kill the fellow. I ——”

"Why, there he goes to the depot now," said Mrs. Watson, pointing out of the window at the retreating form of the book agent making for the train.

"But it's too late to catch him, and I'm not dressed. I've taken off my boots, and ——"

Just then Mr. Stevens, a neighbour of Mr. Watson, drove by, when Mr. Watson pounded on the windowpane in a frantic manner, almost frightening the horse.

"Here, Stevens," he shouted, "you're hitched up; won't you run your horse down to the train and hold the book agent until I come? Run! Catch him now!"

"All right," said Mr. Stevens, whipping up his horse and tearing down the road.

Mr. Stevens reached the train just as the conductor shouted, "All aboard!"

"Book agent!" he yelled, as the book agent stepped on to the train. "Book agent! Hold on! Mr. Watson wants to see you."

"Watson? Watson wants to see me?" repeated the seemingly puzzled book agent. "Oh, I know what he wants! He wants to buy one of my books; but I can't miss the train to sell it to him."

"If that is all he wants, I can pay for it and take it back to him. How much is it?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"Two dollars for the 'Early Christian Martyrs,'" said the book agent, as he reached for the money and passed the book out through the car window.

Just then Mr. Watson arrived, puffing and blowing, in his shirt sleeves. As he saw the train pull out he was too full for utterance.

"Well, I got it for you," said Stevens; "just got it and that's all."

"Got what?" yelled Watson.

"Why, I got the book — 'Early Christian Martyrs,' and ——"

"By the great guns!" moaned Watson, as he placed his hand on his brow and staggered into the middle of the street.

WHAT HE WANTED IT FOR

THOSE who attended the sale of animals from Barnum's hippodrome in Bridgeport, once wrote J. M. Bailey, the Danbury newsman, report the following occurrence: A tiger was being offered. The bid ran up to forty-five hundred dollars. This was made by a man who was a stranger, and to him it was knocked down. Barnum, who had been eying the stranger uneasily during the bidding, now went up to him and said:

"Pardon me for asking the question; but will you tell me where you are from?"

"Down south a bit," responded the man.

"Are you connected with any show?"

"No."

"And are you buying this animal for yourself?"

"Yes."

Barnum shifted about uneasily for a moment, looking alternately at the man and at the tiger, and evidently trying his best to reconcile the two together.

"Now, young man," he finally said, "you need not take this animal unless you want to, for there are those here who will take it off your hands."

"I don't want to sell," was the stranger's quiet reply.

Then Barnum said, in his desperation:

"What on earth are you going to do with such an ugly beast, if you have no show of your own and are not buying for some one who is a showman?"

"Well, I'll tell you," said the purchaser. "My wife died three weeks ago. We had lived together for ten years, and — and I miss her." He paused to wipe his eyes and steady his voice, and then added, "So I've bought this tiger."

"I understand you," said the great showman in a husky voice.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE FERRYMAN

A PHILOSOPHER stepped on board a boat to cross a stream; on the passage he inquired of the ferryman if he understood arithmetic. The man looked astonished:

"Arithmetic? No, sir; never heard of it before."

The philosopher replied: "I am very sorry, for one quarter of your life is gone."

A few minutes after, he asked the ferryman: "Do you know anything of mathematics?"

The boatman smiled, and replied: "No."

"Well, then," said the philosopher, "another quarter of your life is gone."

A third question was asked the ferryman: "Do you understand astronomy?"

"Oh, no, no, never heard of such a thing."

"Well, my friend, then another quarter of your life is gone."

Just at this moment the boat ran on a rock. The ferryman jumped up, pulling off his coat, and asked the philosopher, "Sir, can you swim?"

"No," said the philosopher.

"Then," shouted the ferryman, "your whole life is gone, for the boat is going to the bottom."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

THEIR DREAMS

(This story dates from the fifteenth century.)

TWO townsmen and a countryman, on a pilgrimage to Mecca, agreed to share provisions till they should reach Mecca. But the victuals ran short, so they had nothing left but a little flour — enough to make a loaf. And the townsmen, seeing that, said one to the other: “We have but little food, and our companion eats much, how shall we bring about that he shall eat none of the bread, and that we alone eat it?” And they took this counsel — they would make the loaf, and whilst it was baking should all go to sleep, and whoever dreamed the most marvellous thing in that time, he should alone eat the bread. This they did, thinking to betray the simple rustic, and lay down to sleep. But the rustic saw through their treachery, and when the companions were sleeping took the half-baked bread, ate it, and turned to sleep. Then one of the townsmen awoke as one dreaming and afraid, and called to his companion; and the other said: “What hast thou?”

“I saw a marvellous vision; methought two angels opened the gates of heaven, and bore me before the face of God.”

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

And his companion said: "Marvellous is that vision. But I dreamed that two angels seized me, and, cleaving the earth, bore me to hell."

The rustic heard all this and pretended to sleep, but the others called out to him to awake, and he discreetly, as one amazed, replied: "Who are ye that are calling me?"

They replied, "We are thy companions."

And he said, "Have ye returned?"

And they said, "Whence wouldst thou have us return?"

And the rustic said: "But now methought I saw two angels take the one of you to heaven, and then two other angels took the other to hell; and seeing this, and thinking you would neither return, I got up and ate the loaf."

MY FINANCIAL CAREER

By Stephen Leacock

(By permission. Life Publishing Company.)

WHEN I get into a bank I get rattled. The clerks rattle me; the wickets rattle me; the sight of the money rattles me; everything rattles me.

The moment I cross the threshold of a bank

I become a hesitating jay. If I attempt to transact business there, I become an irresponsible idiot.

I knew all this beforehand, but my salary had been raised to fifty dollars a month, and I felt that the bank was the only place for it.

So I shambled in and looked timidly around at the clerks. I had an idea that a person about to open an account in a bank must needs consult the manager.

I went up to a wicket marked "Accountant." The accountant was a tall, cool devil. The sight of him rattled me. My voice was sepulchral.

"Can I see the manager?" I said, and added solemnly, "alone." I don't know why I said "alone."

"Certainly," said the accountant, and fetched him.

The manager was a grave, calm man. I held my fifty-six dollars clutched in a crumpled ball in my pocket.

"Are you the manager?" I said. God knows I didn't doubt it.

"Yes," he said.

"Can I see you," I asked, "alone?" I didn't want to say "alone" again, but without it the thing seemed self-evident.

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

The manager looked at me in some alarm. He felt that I had an awful secret to reveal.

"Come in here," he said and led the way into a private room. He turned the key.

"We are safe from interruption here," he said. "Sit down."

We both sat down and looked at one another. I found no voice to speak.

"You are one of Pinkerton's men, I presume?" he said.

He had gathered from my mysterious manner that I was a detective. I knew what he was thinking and it made me worse.

"No, not from Pinkerton's," I said, seemingly to imply that I came from a rival agency. "To tell you the truth," I went on, as if I had been prompted to lie about it, "I am not a detective at all. I have come to open an account. I intend to keep all my money in this bank."

The manager looked relieved, but still serious; he concluded now that I was a son of young Rothschild, or a young Gould.

"A fairly large account, I suppose?" he said.

"Fairly large," I whispered. "I propose to deposit fifty-six dollars now, and fifty dollars a month regularly."

The manager got up and opened the door. He called to the accountant.

"Mr. Montgomery," he said unkindly loud, "this gentleman is opening an account. He will deposit fifty-six dollars. Good morning."

I rose.

A big iron door stood open at the side of the room.

"Good morning," I said, and stepped into the safe.

"Come out," said the manager coldly, and showed me the other way.

I went up to the accountant's wicket and poked the ball of money at him with a quick, convulsive movement as if I were doing a conjuring trick.

My face was ghastly pale.

"Here," I said, "deposit it." The tone of the words seemed to imply: "Let us do this painful thing while the fit is on us."

He took the money and gave it to another clerk. He made me write the sum on a slip and sign my name in a book. I no longer knew what I was doing. The bank swam before my eyes.

"Is it deposited?" I asked, in a hollow, vibrating voice.

"It is," said the accountant.

"Then I want to draw a check."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

My idea was to draw out six dollars of it for present use. Some one gave me a check book, through a window, and some one else began telling me how to write it out. The people in the bank had the impression that I was an invalid millionaire. I wrote something on the check and thrust it in at the clerk. He looked at it.

"What! Are you drawing it all out again?" he asked in surprise. Then I realized that I had written fifty-six instead of six. I was too far gone to reason now. I had a feeling that it was impossible to explain the thing. All the clerks had stopped writing to look at me.

"Yes, the whole thing."

"You withdraw your money from the bank?"

"Every cent of it."

"Are you not going to deposit any more?" said the clerk astonished.

"Never."

An idiot hope struck me that they might think something had insulted me while I was writing the check and that I had changed my mind. I made a wretched attempt to look like a man with a fearfully quick temper.

The clerk prepared to pay the money.

"How will you have it?" he said.

"What?"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

"How will you have it?"

"Oh," I caught his meaning and answered without even trying to think. "In fifties."

"And the six?" he asked dryly.

"In sixes," I said.

He gave me it and I rushed out.

As the big doors swung behind me I caught the echo of a roar of laughter that went up to the ceiling of that bank. Since then I bank no more. I keep my money in cash in my trousers pocket, and my savings in silver dollars in a sock.

ITEMIZED BILL

[This does not come exactly under the head of "good story," but its quaint humour cannot be resisted]

AN artist who was employed to retouch a large painting in an old church in Belgium rendered a bill for \$100.

The church trustees, however, required an itemized bill, and following was duly presented, audited, and paid:

Correcting the Ten Commandments	\$7.10
Embellishing Pontius Pilot and putting new ribbon on his bonnet	3.02
Putting new tail on the rooster of St. Peter . . .	4.18
Regilding left wing of guardian angel	2.02

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

Washing the servant of the High Priest and putting carmine on his cheek	\$3.10
Renewing Heaven	1.00
Adjusting stars	2.06
Cleaning moon	.10
Restoring lost souls	25.00
Rebordering the robes of Herod — adjusting his wig	1.43
Taking the spots off the sun of Tobias	1.00
Cleaning Balaam's ass and putting new shoe on him	5.06
Putting earrings on Sarah's ears	30.00
Putting new stone in David's sling	1.10
Enlarging the head of Goliath	1.03
Extending Saul's legs	2.05
Decorating Noah's ark	6.50
Mending the shirt of the Prodigal Son	6.35
Brightening up the flames of hell	.60
Putting new tail on the devil	1.50
Putting a silver dollar over the poor box	.80
Doing several odd jobs for the damned	1.00

\$100.00

THE BUGLE

THE following story is told by a German veteran of the Civil War:

“Von day vile I was in Vicksburg, during de var, a cock-eyed soldier came into my store mit an old bugle in his hand, und he looks around. I asks him vat he vants, und he buys a couple of undershirts; den he tells me to keep his bundle and de bugle behind de counter until he comes back. After de soldier vent de store out, some

more come in und valk around, vile dey look at de goods.

"Shentlemen," I says, "do you vant anyding?"

"Ve are shoost looking to see vot you haf," said one uf dem; und afder a vile anodder says: "Bill, shoost look dere at de bugle; de very ding de captain told us to get. You know we don'd haf any bugle in de company for dree months. How much you ask for dot bugle?"

I tells dem dot I can't sell de bugle because it belongs to a man vot shust vent out.

"I vill give you fifty dollars for id," says de soldier, pulling his money out.

I dells dem dot I don't care to sell, because it vasn't mine.

"I vill give you a hundred dollars," he says.

Den he offers me von hundred und twenty-five dollars. My gr-r-racious! I vants to sell de bugle so bad dot I vistles! De soldier tells me vile dey vos leaving de store if I buy de bugle from de man vot owns it, dey vill gif me von hundred und twenty-five dollars for it. I dell dem I vill do it. I sees a chance, you know, Herman, to make some money by de operation.

Ven de cock-eyed soldier comes in he says:

"Git me my bundle and bugle; I got to go to camp."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

I says, "My frient, don't you vant to sell your bugle?"

He dell me "no," und says I:

"My little boy Leopole vot plays in de store sees de bugle and he goes around crying shust so loud as he can, because he don't can't get it. Six times I takes him in de yard und vips him und he comes right back und cries for de bugle. It shows, you know, how much drouble a man haf mit a family. I vill gif you ten dollars for it shust to please Leopold."

De soldier won't take it, und at last I offers him fifty dollars, und he says: "Vell, I vill dake fifty, because I can't vaste any more time; I haf to go to de camp."

After he goes away, I goes to de door und watches for de soldiers vot vant de bugle; and I says:

"My friends, I haf got de bugle; und dey says:

"Vell, vy don't you blow it?"

FISH

THERE was a man walking through a mountainous region one day selling fish. As he went along he called: "Fish for sale! Fish for sale!"

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

Going through a valley he chanced to look up and on top of a very tall mountain which loomed into the sky he saw a tiny hut, and closer his eagle eye seemed to discern signs of life. Being an ambitious and painstaking fish man, he settled his hamper of fish more firmly on his back and slowly climbed up to the top of the mountain. When he reached the hut he knocked at the door and a man came out, and he said to the man: "Any fish to-day?"

The man took his pipe out of his mouth, and looking over the dealer, replied: "No fish to-day."

The man went back down the mountain. When he had reached the bottom he happened to look up and he saw the man in front of the hut beckon to him. Once more he settled his fish hamper on his back and once more slowly climbed up to the top of the mountain. When he got within hearing, the man in front of the hut said to him:

"I don't want any fish to-day nor to-morrow either."

MOTTO FOR A MARRIED MAN

Be sure you're right, and then keep quiet about it.

BEWARE!

THE jack of all trades during all ages has been the butt of the satirist. The following story illustrates the fatal propensity to cover too much ground at the same time:

Little Willie's father presented him upon one occasion with a pet chameleon — one of those diplomatic little animals that changes his colour as the occasion may inspire. Willie was very much interested in his pet for several days until one evening his father noticed that he was sitting alone with a far-away look in his eyes.

"Well, Willie," said his father, "what did you do with the chameleon?"

"He is gone, father! — for ever."

"Gone?"

"Yes, I tried to play a new game with him."

"What kind of a game, Willie?"

"Well, I put him on a blue and he turned blue. I put him on a green and he turned green. I put him on a red and he turned red — and then —"

"What happened then, Willie?"

"I put him on a plaid and he busted himself trying to make good."

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

PRESERVES

SOME time ago Henry James occupied an English country residence which was next door to quite a large estate which had been bought by a London merchant who had made his money out of jam, and with all of the characteristics of the parvenu had set himself up as a gentleman. It happened that one of Mr. James' servants strayed over on the property of this jam merchant with poaching intent and the gentleman wrote to Mr. James, in great indignation, requesting him to keep his servants away. Mr. James replied as follow:

Mr. _____

DEAR SIR:

I regret very much that my servant has been poaching upon your preserves and will endeavour to avoid a repetition of this act.

Yours very truly,

HENRY JAMES.

P. S. — Please excuse me for mentioning preserves.

BUSY

THE Cork driver had a brother in Dublin who got a chance (and took it) of explaining the sights of the town to a stranger. The stranger was an Englishman, and as the car was passing

THE BEST STORIES IN THE WORLD

the post-office, he said to the jarvey: "This is a very fine building."

"Ach, sor," said he, with a truly Irish bull, "but ye should see the front. This is the back — the front's behind."

"Then what are those figures on the roof?" asked the Englishman.

"Those, sor," replied the Jehu, "are the twelve apostles."

"The twelve apostles?" repeated the tourist; "there are only three,"

"Ach, sure," said Pat in a tone that indicated anything was good enough for an Englishman. "The rest are inside sortin' the mail, sor."

LOST AND FOUND

THE ferryman, while plying over a water which was only slightly agitated, was asked by a timid lady in his boat whether any persons were ever lost in that river. "Oh, no," said he, "we always finds 'em again, the next day."

THE END

INDEX

About a Pair of Pants	109	Beware!	235
Absconder, The	6	Bible, Backed by the	41
Acute Judge, An	143	Big Difference, A	3
Advice, Professional	100	Bill, Itemized	230
Advice, Rubinstein's	80	Binding	175
Age, Showed Its	74	Birds of a Feather	141
All	166	Bismarck to the Rescue	65
All in a Nutshell	73	Black Sheep, A	154
All Over	132	Blue Ribboner, A	43
All Right, It Was	98	Boat, In the Same	23
All Right, It Was	181	Bones (Essay by a School Boy)	31
Almost a Necessity	114	Book Agent, A Live	218
Amendment, An	176	Boys, An Exchange of	100
American, A True	22	Bugle, The	231
American Gamin, The	133	Busy	236
Angle, The	174		
Anthem	116	Caddy, A Doubtful	114
Appropriate	9	Called Down	129
Approved, He	212	Canny Minister, A	38
Arrangements	174	Career, My Financial	225
Artillery, Mule	213	Carrying His Audience	11
Audience, Carrying His	11	Case in Point, A	30
Awful!	120	Case Was Dismissed, Why the	58
		Caste	77
Backed by the Bible	41	Cause for Rejoicing	48
Bargain, A	149	Chances, Taking No	19
Barnum Emptied His Show, How	212	Circumstantial	172
Barred Out	211	Citizen, A Useful	36
Belief	109	Codfish, On the	115
Believed in Himself	18	Coin, Fast	199
Best They Could Do	126	Cold Reception, A	128
Better, Going Him One	192	Columbus, Essay on	106
Better Than an Officer	139		

INDEX

Combination, The Right	168	Directions	53
Comparisons Are Sometimes Embarrassing	59	Dismissed, Why the Case Was	58
Compassion	147	Disproved	26
Completing the List	138	Disputed Statement, A	196
Continuous	42	Distinct, Quite	113
Continuous Performance, A	190	Dog, A Lost	96
Contrary, Evidence to the	85	Dog and an Empty Hole, The Story of a	151
Conundrum, A	92	Doing Himself Proud	182
Corrected	30	Doubt, In	80
Courage	8	Doubtful Caddy, A	114
Courteous	123	Drawing the Line	57
Critical Moment, A	26	Dreams, Their	224
Criticism, A Just	209	Easing His Mind	85
Crowded	112	Easy	136
Curiosity, A Natural	71	Encouraging	5
Dachshund, The	159	Essay by a School Boy: Bones	31
Dawn, In the Cold Gray	188	Essay on Columbus	106
Dear! Dear!	50	Etiquette	211
Declined	126	Evidence	162
Declined with Thanks	12	Evidence	184
Declining a Manuscript	175	Evidence to the Contrary	85
Deduction	17	Exception, No	87
Deductive	141	Exchange of Boys, An	100
Defender, A Real	210	Excuse, No	27
Defined	61	Experience, A New	67
Definition	79	Experienced	4
Definition, A Universal	137	Experienced	79
Deliberate	88	Explained, He	182
Demands, Supplying All	39	Extensive Record, An	41
Denial	146	Extravagant?	44
Derelict, A	186	Extravagant	147
Descent	197	Faith	70
Desperate Measures	176	Faithful Pigeon, The	202
Destruction, His	173	Fame	200
De Trop	13	Far, He Went Too	7
Devotional	77	Fast Coin	199
Difference, A Big	3	Fault, Not His	78
Dilatory	144		
Dire	99		

INDEX

Fault, Not His	145	He Approved	212
Feeling, A Universal	28	He Drew the Line	165
Feelings, His	177	He Explained	182
Felt He Could Afford to Wait	84	He Knew	43
Ferryman, The Philos- opher and the	223	He Laughed Last	217
Fickle Memory	51	He Took It	181
Figuratively Speaking	123	He Went Too Far	7
Financial Career, My	225	Headquarters, From	21
Fish	233	Hearty	91
Fool, No.	134	Her Property	82
Fools, Pedigree of	216	Heterogeneous	36
Found, Lost and	237	His Destruction	173
Foundation, Solid	136	His Fault, Not	78
Franklin, Wise	215	His Feelings	177
Friendly Relations	72	His Identity	151
From Headquarters	21	His Lapse	121
From His Standpoint	199	His Lesson	87
Gallantry, True	210	His Limit.	21
Gamin, The American	133	His Position	69
Gastronomical	25	His Preference	72
General Principles, On	101	His Price	202
Genius, Positive	10	His Reason	82
Georga Washingdone	187	His Task	156
Getting Away, No.	70	His Trial	142
Glad News	112	Hold Up, A	139
Going Him One Better	192	Honoured	111
Golden Moment Over, The	68	Honoured Guest, An	94
Great System, A	118	Hope, No.	112
Grown Ups Feel This Way, Some	51	How Barnum Emptied His Show	212
Guest, An Honoured	94	Humanity, Uncommon	101
Guilty	205	Identity, His	151
Guilty, Not	184	Ignorance Is Bliss, Where	90
Habit	92	Ignorance Was Not Bliss, Where	123
Hands, In His.	78	In Doubt	80
Hard Work	190	In His Hands	78
Harmonious	138	In the Cold Gray Dawn	188
Haughty	144	In the Same Boat	23
		In Union There Is Cour- age	18
		In Wrong	59

INDEX

Inducement	74	Lost Dog, A	96
Infinitesimal	84	Manuscript, Declining a	175
Information Wanted	159	Martin Comes, When	101
Instance, Only One	201	Matched	143
Introducing an Old Friend	89	Material	64
It Was All Right	98	Matter of Pride, A	191
It Was All Right	181	Measures, Desperate	176
Itemized Bill	230	Memory, Fickle	51
Johnny, Keeping the News from	39	Merely Technical	15
Judge, An Acute	143	Mind, Easing His	85
Just Criticism, A	209	Minister, A Canny	38
Keeping the News from Johnny	39	Misnamed	118
Knew, He	43	Missing	20
Knew Him	157	Modesty	164
Labourer, A	137	Moment, A Critical	26
Lapse, His	121	Moment, The Psycho- logical	179
Last Hours, Their	93	Money, Saving	9
Laudable Reason, A	163	Moral, A Story with a	208
Laughed Last, He	217	Moral to This, No	49
Leading Question, A	117	Mule Artillery	213
Lesson, His	87	My Financial Career	225
Letter, A	108	Natural Curiosity, A	71
Limit, His	21	Necessity, Almost a	114
Limited	177	Negative	52
Line, Drawing the	57	Nerve	29
Line, He Drew the	165	New Experience, A	67
List, Completing the	138	News from Johnny, Keeping the	39
Literal	8	News, Glad	112
Literal	166	News, No	196
Literary Style?	45	News, No	206
Live Book Agent, A	218	New York and Phila- delphia	204
Lively Occupation, A	5	No Exception	87
Looks, Particular About His	81	No Excuse	27
Losing His Self-Confidence	47	No Fool	134
Lost and Found	237	No Getting Away	70
		No Hope	112
		No Moral to This	49
		No News	196

INDEX

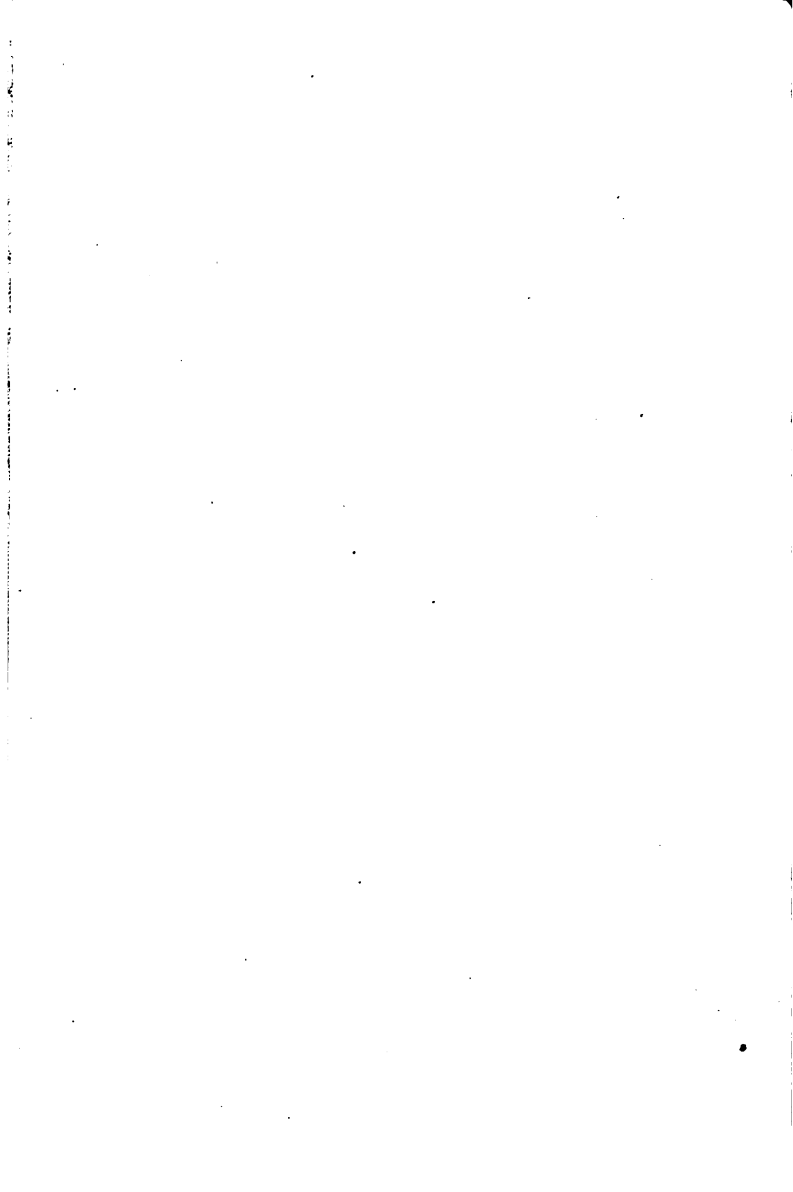
No News	206	Personal, Too	76
No Red Tape!	49	Philadelphia, New York and	204
No Sacrifice.	72	Philosopher and the Ferryman, The	223
Not a Preference.	192	Pigeon, The Faithful	202
Not All Wasted	57	Polite	180
Not Guilty	184	Position, His	69
Not His Fault.	78	Positive Genius	10
Not His Fault.	145	Practical	153
Not Much!	122	Precise	150
Not Overlooked	132	Preference, His	10
Nourished	94	Preference, His	72
Numerous	55	Preference, Not a	192
Nurse, The Trained	168	Preserves	236
Nutshell, All in a	73	Price, His	202
Objection, An	96	Price, The	83
Occupation, A Lively	5	Pride	3
Officer, Better Than an.	139	Pride, A Matter of	191
Old Friend, Introducing an	89	Pride in His Profession	49
On the Codfish	115	Pride, Professional	167
On the Verge	193	Principles, On General	101
One on Him	83	Probing the Past.	28
One Way of Looking at It	209	Profession, Pride in His	49
Only One, The	119	Professional Advice	100
Only One Instance.	201	Professional Pride.	167
Only Way, The	54	Prolongation	211
Optimism.	198	Proper Moment, The.	19
Order	178	Proper Question, A	194
Overlooked	179	Property, Her	82
Overlooked, Not.	132	Protection	60
Overtrained.	14	Proud, Doing Himself	182
Pants, About a Pair of	109	Psychological Moment, The	179
Particular About His Looks	81	Purely Personal	163
Past, Probing the	28	Putting the Question	62
Patient Tommy	35	Puzzle, A	16
Pedigree of Fools	216	Question, A Leading	117
Performance, A Contin- uous	190	Question, A Proper	194
Personal, Purely.	163	Question, A Superfluous	125
		Question, Putting the	62
		Quite Distinct.	113

INDEX

Rapid Fire	28	Skeptical	113
Rather Had Him.	185	Solid Foundation	136
Real Defender, A	210	Some Grown Ups Feel This Way	51
Reason, His.	82	Something Wrong	75
Reception, A Cold	128	Specifications	105
Record, An Extensive	41	Specifications	148
Red Tape, No.	49	Standpoint, From His	199
Rejected	125	Statement, A Disputed	196
Rejoicing, Cause for	48	Stature	145
Relations, Friendly.	72	Stool Was All Right, The	178
Repartee	47	Story of a Dog and an Empty Hole, The	151
Repudiated	155	Story with a Moral, A	208
Resemblance	91	Studies of the Vernacular	107
Resented	18	Superfluous Question, A	125
Resigned	40	Supplying All Demands.	39
Resourcefulness of the Wheelbarrow	158	Suspicious	64
Responsibility.	180	Sympathy	161
Retribution	161	Synthesis	194
Reversion to Type	46	System, A Great	118
Right Combination, The	168	Tables, Turning the	65
Rubbing It In.	53	Tact	92
Rubinstein's Advice	83	Tact	154
Sacrifice, No	72	Taking No Chances	19
Sailor's Wish	12	Tally!	52
Same Boat, In the	23	Task, His.	156
Satire	66	Technical, Merely	15
Saved	170	Tedious	30
Saving Money	9	Tender Hearted	172
Scandal, A	111	Thanks, Declined With	12
Self-Confidence, Losing His	47	That Settled It	63
Self-Preservation	146	Their Dreams	224
Sentiment	131	Their Last Hours	93
Short	24	Time Enough	186
Show, How Barnum Emptied His	212	Tit for Tat	50
Showed Its Age	74	Tit for Tat	127
Similitude	183	Tom Sawyer to Date	76
Simple Life, The	37	Tommy, Patient.	35
Simultaneous	140	Too Far	24
Sitting Strut, A	38	Too Far, He Went	7
		Too Late	62

INDEX

Too Personal	76	Vernacular, Studies of	
Too True!	87	the	107
Trained Nurse, The . . .	168	Vocal Standard, A . . .	130
Training, In	95		
Trial, His.	142	Wait, Felt He Could	
Trouble Enough	34	Afford to	84
Trout	6	Wanted the World to	
True American, A	22	Know	86
True Gallantry	210	Washingdone, Georga. .	187
Turning the Tables . . .	65	Wasted, Not All.	57
Type, Reversion to . . .	46	Way It Began, The . . .	67
		What He Wanted It	
Unanswerable	45	For	221
Uncommon Humanity . .	101	What Was the Use? . . .	52
Unimaginative	73	Wheelbarrow, Resource-	
Union There is Courage,		fulness of the	158
In	18	When Martin Comes. . .	101
Universal Definition, A.	137	Where Ignorance is Bliss	90
Universal Feeling, A . . .	28	Where Ignorance Was	
Unprejudiced	183	Not Bliss	123
Up to Him	17	Why Not?	25
Up to Him	61	Why the Case Was Dis-	
Up to Them	126	missed	58
Upside Down	55	Wise Franklin.	215
Use, What Was the . . .	52	Witnesses.	110
Useful Citizen, A	36	Work, Hard	190
		Wrong, In	59
Verge, On the	193	Wrong, Something . . .	75



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY
BERKELEY

Return to desk from which borrowed.
This book is DUE on the last date stamped below.

DEC 1 1947

17 Sep '55 MC

APR 2 1 1948

SEP 4 1955 LU

25 Nov '49 SS

17 Dec '49 JG

11 JUL 51 WTR

Jun 27 '51 U

5 Jun '52 DP

MAY 2 2 1952 LU

16 May '55 HJ

MAY 2 1955 LU

YB 11646

281731

281731

917h

M42

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

